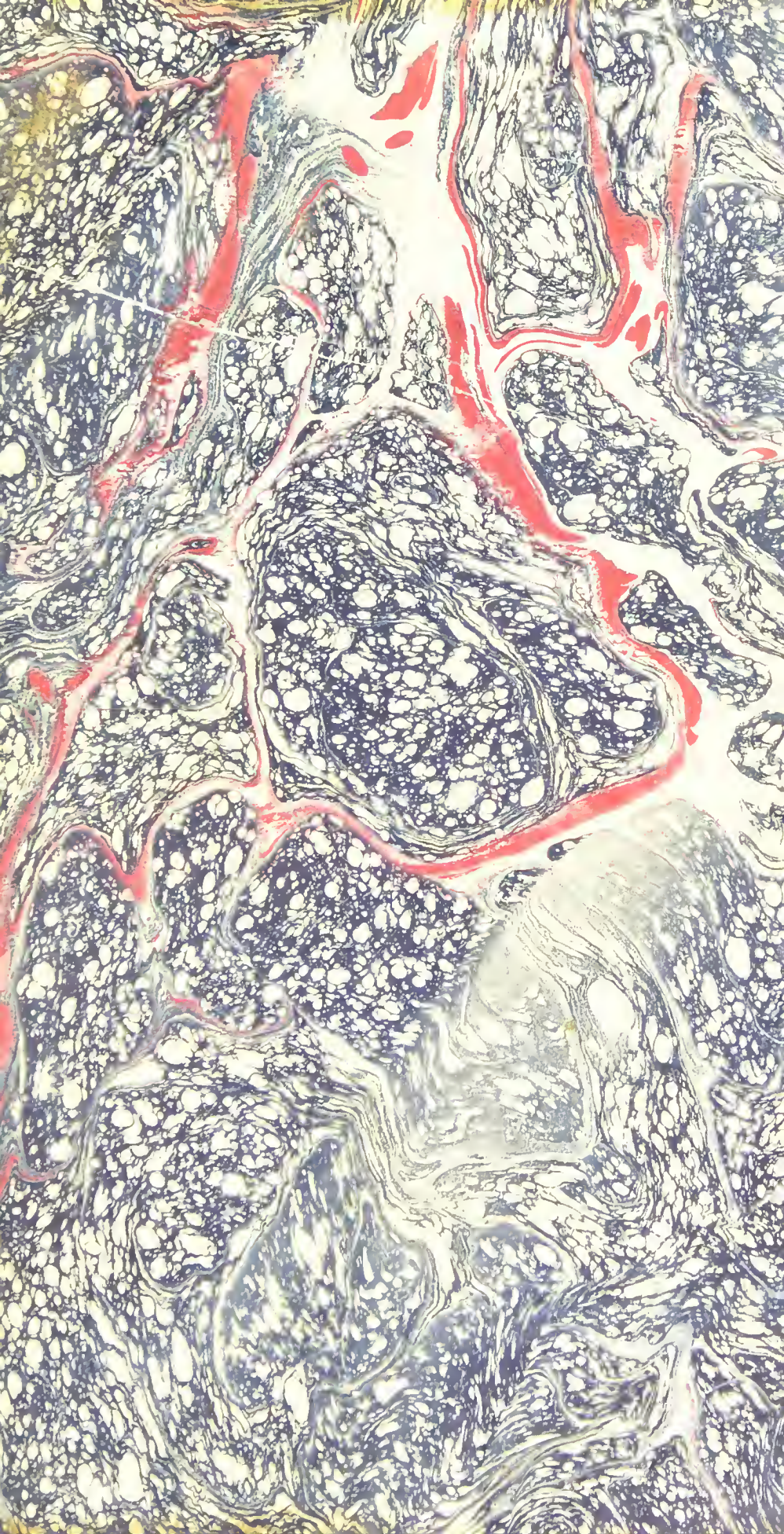


EDWARD HENRY SCOTT









Scott





# L E T T E R S

FROM

BARBARY, FRANCE, SPAIN,  
PORTUGAL, &c.

BY AN ENGLISH OFFICER.

*Major Sardine*

---

Il s'agit de faire penser, et non de faire lire.

MONTESQUIEU.

---

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

---

L O N D O N:

PRINTED FOR T. CADELL, IN THE STRAND.

MDCCLXXXVIII.





TO  
THEIR ROYAL HIGHNESSES  
THE PRINCE OF WALES,  
AND  
DUKE OF YORK,  
THE  
FOLLOWING LETTERS,  
IN WHICH  
THE AUTHOR ATTEMPTS TO TREAT  
OF SUBJECTS OF THE HIGHEST  
IMPORTANCE TO PRINCES,  
ARE,  
WITH GREAT HUMILITY,  
DEDICATED,  
BY THEIR MOST FAITHFUL  
AND DEVOTED SERVANT,  
THE AUTHOR.



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## P R E F A C E.

THE Author does not mean, by a Preface, to make fashionable unmeaning apologies for intruding his thoughts on the Public. If there is any obligation on either side, the world is certainly as much obliged to him for his Book as he can be to them for reading it. Authors surely deserve, at least, thanks as well as criticism from their country for their labours. But thanks and compliments are here out of the question. The common cant of personal politeness is not *à-propos* in this case. Though he feels himself highly honoured and obliged by many respectable individuals; the Public is not an individual, to be wheedled like a child, or soothed like a tyrant; but should certainly be treated with truth and sincerity, which deal not in compliments, and seldom require apologies.

Though it can little concern the world to know whether this correspondence was

originally intended for publication, the Writer thinks proper to mention that, having resided abroad, at different periods of life, and in situations that gave him occasion to see more of Spain, and some other countries, than has usually fallen to the lot of travellers, he was thence led to observe and reflect, perhaps with a more continued attention than ordinary, on the people, their arts, police, character, and above all, on the state of society, and the great art of government, on which depend so much of the progress, civilization, and happiness of mankind. Some of his remarks having been communicated to friends and relations, they have thought the following worth preserving by publication.

In such a correspondence, great inequalities, and want of strict connection, must be expected: regularity and system were not intended. The Author has digressed to a variety of subjects, as the different views in travelling brought them before him, and has indulged in reflections which seemed



then of importance. Some of them may still appear new, others perhaps interesting to many, and even the most singular may be acceptable to some readers; for, it is imagined that, by following only his own ideas and opinions, he is the more likely to be original, and different from other letter-writers of the same kind. He only pretends to give a few hints or sketches of what might be said on the various subjects and nations here mentioned, nor does he always presume to decide on contested or probable opinions. Much more might doubtless be observed in another journey to the same countries. In many subjects, all our attempts towards truth and knowledge can form, at best, perhaps only a perpetual and indeterminate approximation.

Without attempting to improve much upon the careless style and freedom of private letters, he has here endeavoured somewhat to correct and arrange them, and to make some additions from recollec-

tion, and other information. To any uncommon degrees of elegance he forms no pretensions, and aims only at being understood. Some degree of negligence indeed as to style, or at least fine style, he confesses may be rather intentional, from a love of brevity and simplicity, and from a disinclination to join in the growing affectation of the age, the real improvement of which he is more solicitous to promote, than he is ambitious of its praise; and wishes to see a greater importance and attention given to useful knowledge, than to any tumid or pedantic manner of writing, which he thinks neither suitable to the character of the nation, nor of their language. In writing to different people, from the same country, the same subjects must frequently recur, which he has here endeavoured to avoid.

But, after all, if a few repetitions, or rather returns of the same ideas, though in different terms and points of view, or if any inaccuracies of language, and tendency

dency to foreign idioms, should still remain, it is hoped his greater attention to the matter than the manner will be admitted as sufficient apology.

These journies were undertaken, some on business, others from pleasure and curiosity. The first, to Barbary, was an embassy from General Cornwallis, governor of Gibraltar, to the Emperor of Moroco, on various public business, in which the Author had the pleasure of succeeding to the satisfaction of all parties.



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L E T .





L E T T E R S  
FROM  
B A R B A R Y,  
TO  
FRIENDS AT GIBRALTAR.

---

L E T T E R I.

*Arrival at Tetuan, and at La Rache.—Of  
the Moors.—Of the Prince Muley Ali  
Acid.*

La Rache, Nov. 1771.

OF this little African journey, or embassy, which we have undertaken, and at length begun, I do not mean to trouble you with very circumstantial accounts—nor with descriptions, itineraries, or journals, nor perhaps with any thing in

VOL. I.                      B                      the

the usual style of Travels: a few detached observations on the people, with such reflections as I may think worth your notice, will probably be the chief amount of what you have to expect: *et tout a ma façon*, retaining always the liberty to stop at any place I please, and digress to any subject that may come near my way, or seem connected with it:—but all as time and occasion may chance to suit: the natural uncertainty of all human hopes seems to increase as we advance upon this dreary continent: you must take the little I can give, and be thankful. If we could restrain the minuteness of modern trifling curiosity, and go straight to what is useful, how much labour might be saved, and how much farther might we go!

You heard of our arrival at last, after all the opposition of weather and Genoese seamanship: but those were only the beginning of our labours:—the difficulties, noise, wranglings, and time lost, in getting to *Tetuan*, after landing within a mile of it, and in getting the smallest thing done in this country,  
are

are not to be equalled even in Spain, nor in any other place you may be acquainted with. *Tetuan* is considered as the best town in these dominions, but to us it appeared a very wretched place. A dreary silence, poverty, indolence, and dirt, were to us the striking features of their first and most populous city. Its inhabitants are, however, their best looking people, being probably a mixed race from Spain, Arabs, and natives. Upon the banks of that little river which passes near the town, there is some tolerable cultivation, and some little gardens; but all of them jealously concealed, and curiously shut up, almost as much as their houses in town, where there is not a window nor an opening to be seen.

Among so many new objects, one hardly knows which to mention; for to mention all is impossible. The total want of society, and almost of conversation among themselves, seems to us equally dismal and surprising. People bred in such countries are totally ignorant of the social principle which we suppose natural to man. Though

yoked by nature to each other, and brought to live together in towns for mutual convenience, yet are they unacquainted with the pleasures of society, and incapable of enjoying them: their very houses and gardens look like prisons to shut themselves up in, and to exclude every eye, and almost the light of the sun, and seem, as it were, to turn away from each other. When by chance two or three people are seen sitting together, which is seldom, and commonly upon their heels on the dirty ground against a wall, it is all in silence: we seldom see them converse, I think, except when angry. Such are Eastern manners, and the effects of oppression! Men, while oppressed, are not communicative; and they must probably be at their ease before they can be sociable and humane.

The French say, *qu'il faut aimer quelque chose toujours*, but I think these people love nothing. A sullen indolence and indifference seem to exclude every passion and principle of activity; and we do not yet see where the labour can be, in this country,

country, sufficient to maintain its inhabitants. The Moorish character may be somewhat changed and degenerated since the times they flourished in Spain. The iron hand of tyranny has helped to render them still more selfish and malevolent; and what is worse for society, helpless and indolent beings. Such are the subjects that despotism must ever expect to form! Yet we are told they love money to excess. Human nature is full of inconsistencies. This love of money seems to be a plant that will grow any where, and thrive best where it seems to have the least nourishment.

But to go on with our journey. After wrangling for three days with a stupid and brutish governor of Tetuan (who is a shoemaker and a private soldier) concerning horses and mules, though he had the Emperor's orders to furnish us; then nearly three days journey, chequered with various disputes and accidents, now of small importance, through a variable country, with some fine woody hills, we arrived at this place.



We were carried directly to the Prince, saluted with great guns, and attended by a rabble of what they call soldiers. The Prince's impatience to see us, his eager manner of receiving and surveying us with an apparent pleasure and openness of countenance, gave some hopes of a natural curiosity and warmth of heart; but we have already had time to be undeceived; for momentary exertions soon give way to habitual sloth or luxury. Such is too often the unhappy fate of high birth, and is here perhaps inevitable.

Our presents were likewise produced. My celestial globe attracted most of his attention, and I was in hopes he understood something of it, having read and heard of their being formerly addicted to astronomy and mathematics; but was soon undeceived by his questions and observations, though artfully contrived to conceal his ignorance; but ignorance can seldom be concealed. He said, that he had once a master who knew much more than all the Christians.

We

We were sent for next day, and conducted out of town, where stood seven mortars, of three different, but unknown, dimensions. Throwing shells is of late the great passion of this royal family. He said he had heard of the great skill of us Christians, and of mine in particular, in artillery, and desired we would throw a few shells. A barrel of Dutch powder stood ready opened, and we were desired to fire at a pole that stood at some distance. We endeavoured to remonstrate on the necessity of knowing *that* distance, the dimensions, weights; to have the instruments which we had brought on purpose, and to shew his Highness their use: but all in vain. We were desired to fire, and to make haste. My intention was to be politely obstinate, but I suffered myself to be persuaded on political considerations, which I have since found to be wrong, and that my first ideas were the best. We contrived, however, to walk to the pole, to see how near his Highness had thrown a shell. We privately counted our paces, and guessed the dimensions of the pieces by the help of our fingers, and the powder

by fight, feeling, &c.; and though the weights, powder, dimensions, were all so imperfectly known, we chanced to come pretty near the mark, which surprised, but did not please him; and I have since found, that nobody must pretend to fire so well as the Prince.

We continue to be sent for frequently, and treated variably, just as the fits of royal caprice chance to operate. Sometimes with compliments, and at others with neglect, or worse; sometimes with their greatest honours, *viz.* having some bad powder fired in our faces by what they call their troops, chiefly horse; and sometimes by being turned out of court, head and shoulders, in the most rude and violent manner.

Their troops, if they now deserve that name, might be made tolerable light horse, under good officers; and the breed of horses, now rather small, but of a good race, might easily be improved in this country.

Their

Their arms, though not uniform, they say, are mostly made in the country, which I do not believe, as there is no appearance of art, materials, or even tools, sufficient for that purpose.

But, lest I should forget, I cannot help mentioning my amazement, that you should so long continue to employ only Genoese, and other foreign seamen, for the navigation of your garrison, whom you are breeding up for your enemies, when you could be so easily and better served by your own. Half your present number, if English vessels and seamen, would serve you better. Some say that the English could not live where these do, but I think it *is not true*. Hundreds round many of your coasts would be glad of the employ. That the English would be saucier, as some fancy, I likewise doubt.

I dare say some of our friends will envy me the happiness and knowledge to be acquired by this improving journey and embassy, by so intimate an acquaintance  
with

with this polished and enlightened nation, and with such accomplished princes. I have enquired, and find some reason to believe, that my royal pupil understands something of addition, but that multiplication and division are beyond his reach or application; and it is thought he can read his own language. But he has strong notions, which he cannot conceal, of conquering, some time or other, all, or at least half the Christians. You may from thence form some notion of his education, judgment, and ideas. I do not yet foresee how I shall come off with this part of my embassy. You may easily perceive that I shall not be able to teach them much.

What this Emperor means, is not always easy to guess; but at present it is not very difficult. The quantity of military stores, of cannon, mortars, howitzers, shells (all mostly Dutch, and hence not much to be depended on), which he is collecting, is almost incredible, after seeing his country so poor, ignorant, and miserable. But there



there is a total want of all the other small stores necessary to *an artillery of any service*; and indeed of numerous other things, and trades proportioned to these. I see no reason why you should scruple to help them out, as far as they can be helped, which is not far; and you need be under no fear of improving them too much. They, or at least you, ought to know *that it is impossible*.

## L E T T E R. II.

*Differences between European and African Manners.—Population.—Arts.—Industry.—Their Inferiority.*

THE vast difference in every thing on passing those straits, is, perhaps, greater than in any equal distance on our globe, and must so strike an European, that he knows not where to begin to give any account of men or things here.

We are astonished at the total difference in manners, customs, habits, opinions, dress, food, arts, tools, &c. at the different and opposite ways of doing almost every thing; as if the people on these opposite shores meant in every thing to shew their aversion to each other. But I shall not attempt descriptions, which are almost always inadequate. What I may think practicable to give, you may probably get, if I have time.

Some-

Something extraordinary must have driven these poor people into towns, to live in a most shockingly filthy manner, for they are horrid stinking places; and it is rather surprising that the plague, or some other disorders, do not visit them oftener.

If their towns, Morocco, Mequinez, Fez, Tetuan, so far asunder, were cut out into villages, and spread over the face of the country, they might be of some service; but now, can only be of use to the destructive endeavours of despotism, and help the Emperor to impoverish and depopulate the country a little faster.

This country, as far as we have gone, is well varied in hill and vale, and tolerably wooded, though not so well watered, and a little too mountainous; it is capable of every kind of cultivation, and of fences, planting, roads, all which it is now almost without. It seems peopled to about one-fifth of what it might easily be made to maintain, and the labour of the present inhabitants is not probably above one-fourth  
of

of what it might be with more skill and industry; so that it is capable of  $4 \times 5 = 20$  times its present wealth, strength, and importance, by encouraging agriculture only.

These people (especially those of the plains, for the mountaineers are more industrious) are at present but little beyond the *shepherd state* of society; their flocks constitute their chief wealth; attending these is always a lazy profession, and unfavourable to population. The arts and trades necessary for such a state are all here, though in a kind of perpetual infancy; not in a state of progression, as in Europe, but the same for, I suppose, these thousand years past. The plough, the mill, the loom, their lesser tools and methods of working, are for ever the same—simple, trifling, slow, and imperfect, in the true Eastern stile—no proper division of labour. They have the same awkward and unskilful methods of loading their cattle and carrying their burdens that were probably used by Mahomet himself, and even by Abraham.

ham. The same necessaries and ways of life, and kinds of luxury, for ever.

We see Eastern manners here, without going to the East. Every idea of change or improvement is excluded by their law, and by ignorance of their wants. Through the avarice of this emperor, indeed, they may acquire new wants and luxuries, and diminish their national strength and security by means of commerce. An open communication with European nations may, in time, bring them acquainted with our wants, our goods, conveniencies, and luxuries, as they were while in Spain, when they even went beyond their neighbours in arts and luxury. When a nation comes to have sea-ports, ships, magazines, foreign merchants, peace and commerce admitted, and hence property and fixed habitations, these habits must extend by degrees into the country. The removal is not then so easy from an approaching enemy. They necessarily become more connected and attached to their property and improved habitations; and dependent on foreign arts

9 and



and nations. Had they continued attached to the original spirit of their constitution, to their poverty and itinerant state, with all their enmity and abhorrence of Christians, they would have remained either independent and invincible, or not worth the conquest.

It is, to us, truly amazing, that all those stupid Eastern governments, founded in despotism and on principles of unchangeableness, of stability in ignorance, should have succeeded so generally in fixing mankind to a state of barbarism, or so little above it, for ever; in spite of the natural dispositions of men to improve and to better their condition; in spite of that progress which we suppose equally natural to the species and to the individual, notwithstanding the obvious utility of intercourse and industry to all, by an exchange of productions and knowledge.

You know that the same code, the Koran and its comments, called the law, includes their religion, laws, manners, customs; and that the mode of eating their dinners, or  
washing



washing their hands, is as sacredly fixed as that of worshipping their God, and more so than the practice of any virtue, and seem to be considered by all as more essential. This blending of law and religion together may be the best way to form a lasting government and people. This religious veneration for certain modes and actions, must doubtless tend to perpetuate them, and keep the people for ever the same; and their code may have more influence on their minds and manners, than ours upon us.

In modern times, perhaps ever since the days of ancient Rome, pray have not our education and religious establishments had too great a tendency to inspire us with inveterate prejudices against our fellow-creatures, for differing with us in certain opinions? You know the inveteracy of your neighbours on that side against heresy and Mahometism. Here the detestation and abhorrence of all other sects is strong beyond conception, and we should think

scarcely to be humanised by all the powerful influence of arts and civilization.

However, we know that one great and liberal mind can often create, and lead many others; and that these people have had great Princes, who could take liberties with their customs, and could contrive to interpret their law with great latitude; and that it is possible to improve them, almost in spite of themselves. We know that some of their Princes of Cordova and Granada found means to admit the arts and improvements of every kind, many of which were then, and are now again, supposed to be against their law; and if those kingdoms had fortunately continued to subsist in Europe, the means, and perhaps the only means, would thereby have remained open, of softening, and gradually reconciling, in some degree, the inveteracy of those two violent and opposing persuasions of Christianity and Mahometism. There were, at last, frequent intermarriages even between the Spanish and Mahomedan princes.

princes. They might, from vicinity, arts, and intercourse, have been led into mutual forbearance and concessions, which, by degrees, might have produced a more comprehensive system of toleration than the world is now likely soon to enjoy; and this again might, in time, have mitigated and humanised the more rigorous and inimical opinions and political animosities of all nations, and have brought them nearer to reason and each other: means every way preferable to the barbarous inveterate wars, and mutual destruction, which these two sects at least, now seem doomed, with small intermissions, long to carry on against one another.

## L E T T E R III.

*Uncomfortable Situation at Mequinez.*

Mequinez, Jan. 1772.

**I** AM here seven days, six of them in bed; rather ill, where I now write with difficulty, in the cell of a half-ruined convent; the best lodging to be procured here. One day with the Emperor, which made me worse. As my cold fit came on, which he perceived, he ordered a fire to be made for me in the open field, where we were attending to some of his experiments. This I did not know at the time; but on seeing a large pile of brush-wood set on fire, and asking the reason, I was told it was for me, and that the Emperor had ordered it on seeing me shivering with cold. It seems they could not explain to him the nature of my disorder, nor did he know that fevers are often attended with cold fits.

You

You know I was sent in a hurry, but ill provided for this campaigning sort of life. A camp equipage of some sort is here the most necessary and principal comfort of a man's life, especially when so great a part of it must be passed in following this ambling court, whose design, if they have any, seems to be to let nobody rest. Indeed, in this country, it is better living in camp, with almost any sort of conveniences, than in their towns and houses.

We have already seen a good deal of this miserable country, *viz.* the plains, which are in general little cultivated, and still less inhabited, and only by a few tent villages, very thinly scattered, which are generally moved at different seasons, according to the pasture. Our next camp is to be among the mountains, where I expect more pleasure.

You know I have already staid beyond the time at first intended, and that they seldom keep their word. I mention this,



chiefly to caution the General against their applications for my longer stay.

A certain uncouth, inordinate, wild caprice, a want of common civility and humanity, even in the royal family, and which will probably increase as our return approaches; and the now small probability of success in the chief objects, all contribute to render this business as disagreeable as it well can be. I intended to give you some more observations, but I am cold and fatigued, as, in order to have light, a hole must be opened which admits the wind from the snowy mountains just in view. Such is the construction of houses here. Glass is almost unknown.



## L E T T E R IV.

*Of the Emperors, the Prince, and the Modes  
of Living, of Travelling, &c.*

Mequinez.

**I** TAKE this opportunity, by C. B., who now leaves me alone in this dismal court, employed in the agreeable office of dancing attendance from morn to night, and generally without any dinner, on these Princes of Barbary, or Barbarian Princes; call them which you please.

I intended to give you some particulars of our journey hither; but now, when past, they appear of less importance. A journey through a naked, brown, flat country, hardly a tree or a bush, or any inhabitants, to be seen, can afford but little scope for observation.

Our setting off, the first morning, seemed cheerful, with about 500 active horse, wild

and irregular, scampering and firing powder at each other. By this play, however, the Prince killed one young man, but nobody stopped even to assist or take him up.

We encamped every night, but sadly distressed for provisions, and indeed might have starved but for the goodness of the Dutch Consul, who was with the camp. This was the more grievous, because at setting out they would not permit us to provide ourselves, insisting on the Prince's doing it for us. However, one night, we were awaked by some fellows thrusting into our tent some large wooden dishes, sinoaking full of stewed *cuscus*\*, meat, and onions, as a present from the Prince.

Our awkward and tedious method of passing rivers, generally by swimming, deserves not much particular notice. It appears that one man who can swim well, can conduct a great number of horses, by tying them together, if the stream is not very rapid. They make little floats to carry

\* Granulated paste, of the same kind as that of vermicelli.

the baggage, &c. of any thing they can find, of skins blown up, tied together, and covered with brushwood; but sometimes they can find nothing, for the rivers in those plains do not produce grass, or any tree or verdant plant, even on their banks.

The Prince frequently asked me, as we rode along, if we had such fine country for riding. He meant so open and naked. Many great men are, perhaps, too subject to such ideas—from a William the Conqueror, or a King of Persia, down to a Polish Lord or feudal Baron; and they consider their having room to ride or hunt, as of more importance than the producing food for us all, and can even lay waste populous countries on purpose.

The visible terror of all who approached the Prince, seems to give him pleasure; but would certainly give pain to a humane mind.

I am wearied here with having nothing to do, having tired out my poor interpreters, and then a Jew, whom I had persuaded to  
walk

walk with me about the country, and about these half-ruined mud walls and dirty fields, called palaces and gardens. Nobody chuses to walk here, and I may perhaps tire of persisting in being singular, and may learn to be as habitually idle as any of them; though I cannot learn to sit bare-legged on the ground upon my heels, with my back against a wall, which seems the only amusement here of our courtiers, and of the crowds who attend.

## L E T T E R V.

*The Dowars.—Domestic Employments, and  
Manners.—Oppression and Insecurity.*

THE few black and dirty tent villages (dowars), the only habitations in these extensive and naked plains, were at first objects of great curiosity, but soon after of disgust, being shockingly nasty and disagreeable, especially in hot weather. They prefer this roving way of life (governed in small and domestic matters by their own chiefs) to any fixed habitation, where they would be still more tyrannised over by a Bashaw, and more subject to plunder and all sorts of oppression.

The first we saw of these dowars happened to be cleaner than ordinary, lately pitched on a declivity, though usually in the plains, for the convenience of water, and a little cultivation. The inhabitants  
and



and we were striking objects to each other. Their dress and appearance, the screaming and noise of the naked children and dogs that followed and surrounded us; the wild, anxious, and expressive countenances of some of the young females, formed all together a curious scene. We were not, on the whole, ill used; and we understand, that Christians are not now so rudely treated among them as they used to be, by the children throwing stones, accompanied with curses. They now only sometimes give us abusive language, repeating certain phrases of the Koran.

I think it not necessary to tell you much of their occupations in this way of life. They are nearly the same as you find in Scripture in the times of Abraham and Jacob, and that still subsist in some parts of Asia, the domestic employment of the women being still that of weaving, grinding the corn, cookery, &c. Some of their dishes are savoury, often dressed in the steam of the pot, which is generally here of copper, but not often tinned. Here, as in



Spain, the primitive method of treading out the corn by cattle is still practised, instead of threshing. In Europe, the flail has been long in use. Perhaps you may now improve upon *that*, as well as the other machines of husbandry.

In their towns, where the necessary arts and trades are practised, their tools, and methods of working, might be described; but I do not see the utility of those matters to us; their ways of weaving, boring, plaining, cutting, baking, tanning, &c. being all different from ours, but much inferior. Their leather is not now so good as formerly, and I believe you already prepare better of the same kind in England.

You know they use no knives, forks, spoons, chairs, nor tables; those being forbid by their religion. Mahomet, like Lycurgus and most of the Eastern lawgivers, meant to exclude luxury at the expence of every art and comfort of life, and thus render mankind for ever stationary. This we should think impossible, and not in the nature

nature of man, were it not for the example of China. But we know that even their religion is not sufficient for that purpose, where the soil is good, and the government tolerable: despotism must join, and her attendant poverty, effectually to prevent the improvements and the progress of the arts and luxury natural to man.

The camels are very useful here, and proper for the long journies through the dry African deserts. How provident is the Great Author of Nature! They can live a week without water. In some parts the inhabitants live entirely on their milk, with a few dates, and wear only their skins.

We can easily conceive this country to have been once rich and fruitful, as we learn from its imperfect history, and from that of the Romans. It might easily be made to produce food and raiment, &c. in great abundance, by means of a just government. But insecurity and oppression have so long prevailed, as to banish all settled plans of providing; and in these fine corn countries,

countries, they have often suffered frequent scarcity. I believe it is only since some grain has been permitted to be exported, and by the Emperor's laying up some store of it himself, that those frequent famines have been prevented.

But there seems to be very little work going on, even in their towns. Sitting, smoking, and prayers, employ a great deal of their time. Few things seem to rouse them to any voluntary exertions, except their hatred to Christians, which does not yet appear to be so much abated as you suppose, only in some of their sea-ports. They still teach many of their children, in towns, to read and write, and exercise their memories by parts of the Koran. Their methods seem to be simple and direct, and they might easily be carried farther. We know that some of them were once studious and learned. I think one sees in some of their youth, still a certain open warmth and frank honesty of heart; but I believe *that* gradually declines with years into a sullen indifference about well-doing, and produces  
many

many other vices. Despotism soon gets the better of nature.

With such a government, there can be nothing fixed or certain; and of all its uncertainties, that of the succession to the crown is the worst and most destructive. It is here neither hereditary nor elective as yet, being generally seized by usurpation through bloodshed. A civil war commonly attends every succession at least. We, who have the happiness to live in long and well-established societies, cannot be so sensible of the great time and number of circumstances required to establish rules of succession, or indeed any rule or fixed regulation.

These cherifs, or descendants of Mahomet, have a prodigious advantage in that very circumstance, if they knew how to make a proper use of it. There are a number of them still dispersed in this, and probably in other Mahomedan countries. The present reigning family here is of that race. If it were possible to make them travel, and give them any proper education, they might introduce

duce any improvement, or establish any constitution of government they pleased. But, on the contrary, these successors of Muley Ishmael have already nearly destroyed all the good he did, or had begun to do, which was considerable, amidst his mischievous cruelties. He had ideas of colonies even more than of conquests, and brought great numbers from the south to people his country and recruit his armies. But these have already mostly disappeared, the country is again desolate, and the army neglected.

But it can hardly be necessary, now-a-days, to point out the numberless evils and fatal consequences of despotism. If some European nations go on declining in that direction, it can hardly be from want of information of its pernicious effects, but with their eyes open; not from ignorance, but weakness, or from want of order or constitution. But, alas! I fear mankind are not to be *written* into virtue or resolution. Perhaps little more can now be done in that

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way,



way, than to put them frequently in mind of their danger. They might be more sensible of it, if they were to come and see their brethren here. And I am sorry to observe it is not now so much the fashion as formerly, for our travellers to advance beyond the limits of Europe.

From reading some parts of their history, I believe we rank these people too high in the scale of society. We fancy some vestiges of their former greatness and learning must still appear, forgetting the necessary velocity of fall in a declining empire, and how soon it leaves our ideas behind. But degeneracy will, perhaps, always differ from the savage state, and will be weaker, and more abject; and when once sunk and reduced, there seems no possibility of getting them up again, but by conquering and colonising their country. It is astonishing how little even the wisest and most improved nations learn from each other, and how long they are in learning that little; and the ruder nations still less. The higher states of improvement



provement cannot, indeed, impart much of their knowledge to the lower. Our luxuries and improvements suit them not. In order to arrive at these, they must pass through certain steps of a progress, and must learn to want, and be gradually roused to exertions and industry.

## L E T T E R   VI.

*An Audience of the Emperor.—His Family,  
his Court, Injustice, Government, &c.*

YOU must take the few detached observations that I think proper to give you, as they chance to occur, and excuse the want of order and connection.

Some circumstances of our first audience may be worth mentioning. His M— was seated cross-legged, on a very plain sort of platform of rough deal boards, such as are used in your soldiers barracks, covered only with an ordinary piece of carpet. He affects simplicity and discourages luxury. On the attendants attempting to take off my shoes, as usual, on going into his presence, I made some resistance; which he perceived, though at some distance, and with great readiness saved the dispute, and settled the matter, by saying, “ Let him alone,—

“ these Christians are subject to catch cold  
 “ without shoes.”

The chief subject of conversation in this interview, was the great superiority of the Moors over the Christians in every essential quality,—addressing himself to those about him. He soon introduced likewise his knowing how to raise a perpendicular, which he scratched on a board with a carpenter’s compasses. This, which comprehends the chief part of his mathematical knowledge, he learned from a sea captain, once his prisoner; and he generally exhibits it to Christians at their first audience. Then some conversation about artillery, war, and fortification, he likewise artfully managed, so as to pass for very learned with his own people, and to conceal from us his deficiencies, which I was, for once, courtier enough to perceive, and to favour—*et je crois qu’il m’en fut bon grè*. Before we parted, he called me “ *Malem guibir*,” a great master— “ One of the greatest among  
 “ the Christians.” He added, “ You hear  
 “ what he says of me.”

His friends, or at least his favourites, are mostly chosen, I believe, not from any solid or useful qualities, but chiefly from caprice, though not so much as formerly; nor does he change so often, nor can there be any great choice of men among his subjects. Hitherto, I find the Jew secretary the man of most knowledge and best conversation of any about his court. He is doubtless obliged sometimes to consider well, and appoint people who can do the business he wants. The greatest despot is limited in the choice of his men and measures by fear, custom, religion, &c.; and he must often study to chuse with as much precaution and propriety as the most limited monarch. Without the assistance and the numerous advantages of established forms, the whole must depend on his own temporary arts and address, and must create him an immensity of labour impossible to be executed.

Now in the habit of being constantly seen here, I appear to belong to this palace; and I have often the honour of being

as familiarly shoved about by our black courtiers, as any of the rest of the rabble who form the ring around his M—. His levee is in the open air, only he on horse-back, and I think he generally chuses the dirtiest part of the field. There the poor obsequious crowd keep frequently kneeling and kissing the dirty ground, and bawling out his praises, as he speaks. In that posture, with their posteriors cocked upwards, they do not look like human beings, and make a most contemptible figure. Our black courtiers, who may be considered as the lords in waiting, attend with whips and rods, which they use very freely to arrange, or keep people in or out of their places; to assemble or drive us away, on the approach of his M—, or of the Princes, according to the royal orders, or caprice of the moment.

So far from making any progress in either of the objects of business for which I came, they both seem now entirely forgotten, and cannot be revived. I have pleaded over and over all the reasons for dispatch and departure, on the few occa-



sions that have offered. What they mean by keeping me, and especially in this place, is not easy to guess; but there is no appearance of my getting away, until you fall on some more effectual *method*, or assist me to go on with *mine*.

The chief employments of this strange mock royal family seem to be, quarrels among themselves, travelling about the kingdom, and extorting money from every body who has any. We have already seen some cruel instances of this mode of robbing by authority, on both Jews and natives. Even Messrs. A. and B. the only English merchants in the country, were the other day seized in the brutish manner of this court, and carried to confinement, by order of a prince, to extort money from them. *This* he chose to do, while I am here; and it is not the only instance of his chusing to shew me in what contempt he now holds the English nation.

In those cases of extortion, the whole process is comprised in two words, somewhat

what like those we use to dogs, *viz.* *Seize 'em*; and the person to be arrested is presently grappled by a set of clumsy fellows, and almost squeezed to death in the operation of being carried to prison, though he make no resistance.

The spirit of despotism is to let the people have *no rest*, and this Emperor has added, that they shall have *no money*. In order to maintain authority in such governments, it is perhaps necessary to let them frequently feel the power that is over them; for they might forget it, and fancy themselves free, if they could sleep a few nights in quiet. It requires the perpetual exertions of the master to keep the slave awake, and frequent acts of cruelty to maintain respect. What a loss and waste of powers on all sides! And, after all, the active principles of human nature can hardly be kept alive by such means. The greatest ambition and activity in the chief, the hopes of plunder, the regulations and employments he is obliged to contrive and to superintend, so as  
to

to keep his subjects from the extremes of sleep, or of mischief, may sometimes produce temporary exertions, but never a provident and habitual industry. Nothing can supply the place of natural liberty and security. Power may command labour, but not genius or abilities. M. Ishmael used to think it necessary to cut off innocent people's heads, as he rode along, on purpose to strike terror.

There is now much less cruelty here; but then there is more avarice, which seems full as destructive. The boys and mob begin to leave off insulting strangers. Commerce is invited hither, by long peace, though she does not yet seem willing to come; and I doubt much if the country, though a fine soil, can improve or be recovered under such a prince and government, though so much better than any they have had for a long time past.

There must be a great resemblance between the rude nations of all ages and countries. These seem to be very nearly  
the

the same sort of princes and people that Xenophon met with in the East, and about Byzantium; and are very like to nations on different and opposite sides of the globe, who are near to the same degree of civilization. As we improve, we depart from that resemblance; and there is probably some difference between nations who are rising, and those that decline, though near the same degrees of ignorance.

## L E T T E R VII.

*Disappointed in the Hopes of Dismission.—  
Royal Caprices, Indolence, Unhappiness,  
Avarice.—Despotism.*

I N hopes of being able to acquaint you of my departure, I have deferred writing. The Emperor promised me I should go in four days, holding up his four fingers, but 'tis now above twenty since then.

Your General's letters, and those to Tetuan, all came hither. After waiting a week, I found they were still in the translator's hands, and would not be mentioned, nor explained, till his M— should ask for them; which may never happen. I find several such letters are thus sunk, or pretended to be lost, or forgotten; and sometimes by the artifice of our Jew secretary of state, Mr. Sombel.—*A-propos*, he complains grievously of our neglecting him of late. The  
French



French and Spaniards pay him well, though he is obliged to share with his master.

This court is equal to any other whatever in artifice or cunning, and his M— as great an adept in the arts of dissimulation; and, though it is generally so coarse, so ill covered, as to deceive hardly any body, yet all are forced to pretend to be deceived.

The effects of your letters being all against us, I have since tried all methods to get one of my own presented and explained to his M—; and at length persuaded Sombel (with some promises) to stand in the way, with it in his hand, as the Emperor rode past, in hopes of his asking concerning it, which sometimes succeeds, by watching his humour. It succeeded in this case. It was hastily explained. He ordered an answer as he rode off, granting me the prisoners, Captain Hayes and his people, and almost all that I wanted; and I was congratulated by the whole court on being almost as good as dispatched, as it was thought. We went home rejoicing,  
and

and ordered a better supper than ordinary. I have had the maintaining of these poor people for some time, and have found it very difficult, and often impossible, to get their very small allowance from the Jews, who generally have all the prisoners and ambassadors quartered on them, besides many other heavy taxes, forced loans, &c. But, alas! the vanity of human hopes!—ours were all blasted in a few days. Captain H. and most of the prisoners were taken from me, and sent to work with other slaves, and myself told, that I should be dispatched when the Emperor would be at leisure.

Though he is remarkably wavering and irresolute, yet this sudden change is owing, I believe, to other causes:—either to some of your last letters, or to some of your Jew friends in your own garrison, who make a merit here of informing him of all he wishes to know concerning you.

He has learned that he is soon to have another ambassador from you, and he will,

of course, keep these prisoners for a fresh bargain; and they will probably cost you dear. Why you do not chuse to have them for little or nothing, *viz.* for my services here, is to me, as yet, incomprehensible.

I find that this poor Emperor suffers much from low spirits and bad humour, and doses away most of his time in sullen indolence; or with his taylor, Jews, or carpenters, overseeing the mending of doors and windows, and old rooms, with old boards, &c. while he has the business of thousands on his hands, careless about the numbers who are waiting and suffering from his neglect; like too many other great men, who undertake more than they are able or willing to execute. Fearful and jealous even of his own creatures and sons; timidly cautious of delegating the smallest degree of power, he has adopted the weak and impracticable system of doing every act of authority himself, dictating in the minutiae of every man's office throughout the kingdom; and endeavouring to render every one, to whom he is forced to trust  
some

some authority, as contemptible as possible, by which he often defeats his own views. They become his enemies:—he can have no friends. As he cannot be every where, he is perpetually sending for his alcaids, and other magistrates of towns and districts. Those he seems to wish to be considered only as a kind of messengers, whom he sends to fleece the people, and bring all to him.

If any man, by chance or artifice, escape these fleecers, and is suspected of having money, he is sent for by the Emperor, imprisoned, and tortured, till he discovers it; which he does only by degrees, a little at a time. It is surprising to see how much some of them will bear before they discover. Some have been known to die under the tortures, rather than disclose their hidden treasures.

A blind and rapacious avarice seems here the universal and only ruling passion. However strange, this passion for money appears to prevail most where there is the least security, and the fewest pleasures to be purchased.

chased. Most of those wretches, on being released, kiss the ground, bless his M—, and return to get more money, knowing they may again be treated in the same way.

Those who discover the largest treasures, have the best chance of being employed in this honourable magistracy, to serve as his M—'s blood-suckers, where they may most probably be again tortured and robbed, *du part le roy*.

His M—'s talents and information in this business of extortion and robbery are truly astonishing, especially in a monarch, and one of a character so indolent, capricious and *etourdi*, as he appears to be.—His undertaking the business that should be divided among hundreds, and yet to which he does not give one-twentieth part of his time, is all according to the blind nature of despotism, which believes itself capable of every thing, and is, in fact, capable of nothing that is right or systematic.



This listless and uneasy languor that devours him, is likewise perhaps one of the necessary consequences of his *unlimited power*. Nor does this power increase his security, and certainly not his happiness, but the contrary; for we find the history of this, and of all such empires, to be full of sudden and bloody revolutions; and the fate of human nature is happily such, that we must participate largely of the happiness or misery we confer. Such are the disappointments with which nature seems inevitably to punish this insatiable passion, the *love of power*. We must be astonished to find it so seldom inclined to cure itself, or to learn from experience; and equally surprised to find society existing so long under its uncontrolled influence and caprices. Indeed this can hardly be called a state of society, but rather of warfare.

Fear is perhaps the most efficacious of the human passions; but, to govern us by *that* alone, is injurious to our nature, and must curtail or destroy our best powers. The love of power, of riches, in short the human.

man passions, ought all to be either regulated, or repressed; such is the intent and tendency of society. Let legislatures then endeavour to cultivate the benevolent passions in our nature—the selfish will always be strong enough. Success in this, will be the best criterion of government. But certain human passions and defects, here and elsewhere, have got perhaps too far a-head ever to be overtaken by any remedy:—already, over far the greatest part of the world, tyranny and superstition, with ignorance their offspring, seem to have joined in a league against the happiness of the human race, and they may long succeed in the object of their alliance. Their *empire*, once established, seems almost for ever to exclude the hopes of relief. None of the bloody revolutions of despotism prove to be any remedy; only the exchange of one tyrant for another.

## L E T T E R VIII.

*Of the Emperor.—The Inhabitants of the Plains and the Mountains, and ancient Arabian Race.—Importance of National Intercourse.*

I N the few conversations we have had, I have sometimes attempted to turn the attention of his M— to objects of utility: but in vain. Greatness spoils men for conversation, as well as for many other things. Accustomed to take the lead in every thing, they cannot follow when it becomes necessary. They gradually become so fore and fastidious, that they can hardly admit any subject into discourse, but what they introduce themselves. Besides, his habitual and unnecessary cunning, jealousy, and vanity; his ignorant and timid interpreters, render it almost impossible to explain any thing, or to talk common sense to him for any time. He seldom converses with much attention on any subject, except where money is some way concerned.

*Fear*

*Fear* and *avarice*, which are nearly connected, are his ruling passions, and may generally serve as a key to his actions and designs. By these, you may both understand and govern him.

But with all this, he is a just, good, and humane character, for this country. With all the habits of tyranny, and of a bad education, he, nevertheless, does not, like many of his predecessors, wantonly transgress the natural rules of justice, only where his pecuniary interest is concerned, which is, to be sure, much too often for the good of his country, or of his people. He knows the country well, and most individuals who are at all above the common slave. He would make a good *lieutenant de police*—and admit of no robbers but himself. And, indeed, were it not for his own constant attention, his rapacity and injustice would be imitated throughout his dominions.

I do not find that he, like his predecessors, practises the horrid custom of *selling* the power to torture and plunder any one suspected of being rich. He now reserves

that power for himself, and seldom neglects long to use it, though sometimes with unusual lenity, he accepts a *composition* as a purchase of his forbearance. And the generality of those robberies he executes on some pretext of right or justice. Happily even tyrants must often sacrifice, at least appearances, at the shrine of justice. You must excuse haste, and hence my returning often to the same subject.

One sees the character of a people only by glimpses now and then, and which you must take as occasions chance to shine. These people, as troops, with all their indolence, have great fire at times, a momentary kind of courage, rage, or enthusiasm:—*et alors* (a Frenchman told me) *ils se font tuer d'assez bonne grace*. They are temperate, and even abstemious; often penetrating and sagacious; but then they carry it too far, to cunning, duplicity, deceit. They have great pride and *hauteur*; but not that which restrains them from meanness and fraud.

The Moors of the plains, and the Brebers, and other classes of the mountains,  
are



are obviously different races of people. The many revolutions which these northern parts of Africa have undergone, may have repeatedly destroyed all the traces and character of the original inhabitants; but these would perhaps again appear, if left to themselves: in short, the general indigenous inhabitant of all this continent was probably the negro; and the nature of the country may be such, if left to itself, as to turn the present different races all to negroes again in the course of time. But as the mountains here, as elsewhere, have not been so much over-run by enemies as the plains, it is among those first we must look for the oldest inhabitants. They are obviously a different race from those of the plains:—they are generally thin, light, active, and rather fair; and those of the towns and plains, fatter, heavier, and more of a copper coloured and mixed breed.

I suspect there are but few of the ancient Arabian race now remaining in Africa, or they are much degenerated. I have heard there are still some few distinct tribes or

families of them in some of the internal parts behind the Algerine dominions; a more moral and elegant, a proud, but still a pastoral people. Here, poverty and oppression have long since cancelled almost every distinction of character, as well as of rank. The dread and anxiety of perpetual danger hanging over their heads, may be said to suspend all character, and stifle what they would have been under other circumstances. They are sagacious, yet ignorant; rapacious, yet indolent; sometimes active, though not strong, with a rooted and habitual enmity towards all other nations, in proportion, as usual, to their own ignorance and superstition; but the Jews and Christians have long been the most immediate objects of their hatred and contempt.

Vices happily counteract each other in this world. Avarice begins to make them more tolerant here, at least in their seaport towns. The frequent presents and the commerce of the Christians have in some measure fixed their regard and attention; and their hopes of making something of us, procures us some temporary civilities.

On

On mutual control and assistance, on action and counteraction, depends the whole system of nature, physical and moral. It is certainly right that there be a constant intercourse between different countries and climates. All attempts to exclude each other, have proved destructive to nations. The finest countries seem to require the most frequent supplies of people, either as colonists or conquerors. And the world seems to be divided for men, as for cattle, into *breeding* and *fattening* countries; and the latter must be frequently supplied from the former. The finest plains and climates serve at once to fatten, spoil, and enervate their inhabitants, and to invite others from the distant mountains to conquest or colonization.

I am in doubt about some of their customs, ceremonies, dress, &c. if worth mentioning. The Highland *plaid*, and the Moorish *bayk*, are perhaps the same as the Roman *toga*, and they probably had it from other older nations.

## L E T T E R   IX.

*Difficulties of any Change or Progress here.  
—Negligence, &c.*

**I**T is almost impossible for any person or nation, were they ever so willing, to be of the service you mention, to this Prince, or to his country. Your good general need not fear our opening their eyes too much; they are determined, and use means quite sufficient to keep them shut.

The reign of ignorance possesses in itself the most powerful principles of self-preservation, and is perhaps the most durable of all empires. Here no man, except the Prince, can ever be of consequence enough to introduce any change or improvement; and all changes are against their customs, law, or religion, which they do not distinguish, and which likewise prohibits the  
reigning

reigning family from going to sea, so that they can hardly ever travel or acquire knowledge.

From the necessary connection of the arts, were they to attempt any one branch, it must stop at a certain point of the progress for want of others. For example, they may learn to throw shells tolerably well, with much practice; but they cannot get at the theory, nor half the trades and learning necessary towards forming and supporting an artillery. So that shells, from being, even with us, perhaps the least effectual, and certainly the most expensive, of all the machines of war, become, in their hands, almost useless and of no effect. And if they think to take any place by such *bombarding* as theirs must be, they will find themselves egregiously disappointed, or it must be very badly defended. Any other art, as fortification, legislation, manufacture, &c. would share the same fate here, with artillery, if attempted.

Any scruples or difficulties in us, of teaching them up to the point of which they are capable,



capable, would be vain and futile. We might as well attempt to keep them from the sun or air, as from the knowledge and progress to which necessity, and their situation, will naturally carry them. It is not by their ignorance that they can be kept dependent upon us. But it has been from our neglecting to watch this Emperor's views, the changes of times and circumstances, that has lost us his friendship and his dependence on us; while the Dutch, Genoese, Danes, Turks, and even Spaniards, now make a merit of assisting him in all he wants.

I am pleased to perceive, that *you* begin to see the affairs of this country in a new light. I hope such knowledge will extend to other countries, and to higher offices. The number of disagreeable circumstances, and the patience required in this court and country for Europeans, are far beyond what you can there conceive; and how so many of us come hither, is beyond my conception to account for.

All methods of getting away having failed, I am now in actual treaty about a  
bribe

bribe to get a letter delivered, to solicit that favour. And all I ask, besides the prisoners, is to let *me go*; and as he still insists on my asking something, I have mentioned a *horse*; being the usual present here, and such as I can accept.

Many others are here in a similar situation, if that could be any consolation. Some waiting for months, and years; some having come in full expectation of promised payments, or favours, and are at length reduced to the necessity of including them all in that one, of *being permitted to go*. Such are the methods, it is suspected, that he purposely adopts, of paying the services even of strangers and Europeans. You may consider how well he is likely to be served.

As the messenger goes only to-morrow, I sit down again to fill up your paper. To-day entirely at the palace, as usual, starving with hunger and cold, for we have a little frost; but without seeing his M—, though sent for by his orders: but we have waited,

waited, and lounged, and received several of his contradictory messages, as usual too; and have been witnesses of more to others. These things used at first to teaze, but now help to amuse me. But the best message of all (if not contradicted to-morrow) was the last, *viz.* that I shall have the Tetuan Christians, of which he makes a prodigious favour, and that I shall go in a few days.

## L E T T E R X.

*Of the Prince, and Emperor.—Peculiarities.*

WE have explained your letters to the Prince. That part which condemns the consul, gave him great pleasure, and good humour. He laughed heartily as he sat employed in taking to pieces, and spoiling a very good London-made clock, a new Spanish present, which was probably brought there that I might see and judge of their friendship with Spain. I took the opportunity of asking for the seamen, and he readily promised me his interest; then mounted and rode to his father, within a few doors, and the clock may have escaped for the present.

We have, to-day, had some dinner at the palace, an extraordinary thing in these times, *viz.* some almonds and raisins, and, with difficulty, some water.

Our hopes consist in the letters having the same effect on the father as on the son, which I doubt. With him, hardly any one here has personally any other than that short-lived influence which his present passions or necessities sometimes give to those who happen to be near him at the time. I believe he is too fearful and cautious to have a friend, or any one with whom he may regularly consult. Though at once both artful and assuming, and taking the credit of every measure as his own, though borrowed, he carefully avoids the appearance of being at a loss, or in any doubt. Yet he is not unfrequently seen to be greatly perplexed; and is then very solicitous for the opinions of those who chance to be near him, though these are generally dictated by fear, ignorance, or self-interest. Much of his conduct, and of his public measures, favour of such a source. This son is, however, to-day in favour; which was not the case last week.

Their actions and opinions are full of uncertainty, paradox, change, contradiction,  
and



and caprice. But the wild, flighty, variable humour, and true Barbarian character, is much stronger and more conspicuous in the sons than in the father; for he affects wisdom, and sets up for the great head-piece of his family and race: and by means of a little caution, discretion, cunning, and often indeed good sense, he passes here for a Solomon, for profound and deeply learned, but not for brave. The Barbarian idea of courage is inseparable from that of cruelty; and he is humane to a degree almost unknown in his family or in this government; and though his humanity is not quite what we should dignify by that name, nor so powerful as to withstand his avarice when they come in competition, yet it often appears in public, and is the means of saving many lives. He wishes to treat smaller crimes with less severity than has been customary here, and for this he is unpopular, and held in some degree of secret contempt by his more savage sons, and by the remains of the army, who say, “ There should be a stream of blood always flow-  
“ ing from the throne, in order to govern

“this country properly.” And as one of the instances of his weakness, this monarch has been known to be cruel, against his nature, in order to support this character of bravery, and to gain the opinion of such people as these. You know that, *par devoir*, he is the only executioner in his kingdom; and dexterity in cutting off heads, is among the first of royal accomplishments here, and is frequently the subject of common conversation among the people. And with such a people as these now are, it is perhaps the best method of preserving that necessary terror and respect to himself and the laws.

All his resolutions, however extravagant, are supposed to be the immediate inspirations of God. He judges and administers justice in a very hasty and summary way, at his levee. His sentences, being sudden inspirations, often before the cause is half heard—hands, heads, are cut off; the whole process and execution, often the work only of a few minutes. But to his great honour, there are much fewer executions

tions than formerly, as in Muley Ishmael's time, though it is matter of regret to many of his soldiers and subjects.

It is probably from the East, that we too had once got the absurd and terrific idea of kings being God's vicegerents here on earth; an idea which our European princes do not seem, in these days, so fond of propagating; as, fortunately for society, it has become more necessary and useful to be beloved, than to be feared, by their subjects.

## L E T T E R   X I.

*More Anecdotes of the Emperor.—Bad Accommodations, and State of the Arts.*

**T**HIS Emperor is rather in his element at these levees, or audiences. Cunning and sensible, he is no bad courtier, though a coarse one, and says some artful and well-studied things, which often have the effects he intends by them; and though we are not all deceived, all are obliged to praise his wisdom, and pretend to admire and believe—as is not unusual, I believe, at other courts.

He has there lately declared, that he means to make war on the Dutch, if their embassy (that is, their presents) does not soon appear; and it is said, that nothing under ten thousand ducats will answer the purpose, or prevent the war. In short, though not paid  
annually,

annually, it is a tribute; and we are all tributary to him.

He says, he will grant no corn to the Christians this year till late in May. The Christians are quite out of favour of late. He hardly now sees any of those with whom he used to be quite intimate.

The cry of war with any Christian power is always popular here; and he deals out, at his levees, a little hopes of it now and then, for popularity, and other various purposes.

You see the promises of the tenth are forgotten again, as usual, here. One of the Tetuan Christians is taken from me, because Sombel has had a hint of some hopes of a ransom, which he must share with his master. The next that seems to require being asked for, is our Vice Consul of Mogadore.

I write most of this on my knee, *a la Morisco*. We pitch our tent in our room,



and the tent being none of the best, you know, keeps out only part of the rain which comes through the roof of the house. I cannot manage here to keep my feet dry for a whole day, nor to get rid of a second cold, though not so feverish as the first. We have changed from the convent, but for the worse, if possible. It is hard to say which are the most uncomfortable kind of animals for landlords and companions, Spanish friars, Moors, or Jews.

We shall be tolerably good Moors in time, as to indolence and sobriety; and shall have again to learn to drink wine, though not bad water. Slavery itself would probably require only a certain time to reconcile and debase the mind.

The pride of polished times is, perhaps, too apt to consider the affairs of barbarous nations as unworthy of notice, and barren of instruction. But I think a mind that is warm in the pursuits and investigation of human nature, will find her interesting in every shape. Though I must confess, I am  
too

too often out of humour with these people, when teased and fatigued with many disagreeable circumstances. I believe few are ever inclined to repeat their visitation, but such as are obliged to it. Yet when the troubles are over, and diminished by distance and time, and only the agreeable recollections remain, as usual with most journies, I may then perhaps experience a change of sentiment, and may have no material objections to repeat this journey hither in the manner you mention.

Man is probably worth considering in every state and condition of society; and among people, though so far behind us, some arts and works may be observed that at least *seem* worthy our attention, as objects of curiosity, if not of utility. But useful hints may be picked up in almost any country, especially by military men, who should know the simple and ready ways of doing every thing.

The ingenuity, as well as the stupidity of these people, while both differ so widely

from our own, become objects of curiosity to us. They will frequently perform great things with very small means; and, with the most trifling and simple tools, will execute works where we should require a complicated apparatus. They can erect great and extensive buildings without stone, brick, or mortar, and with scarcely any timber, *viz.* of dirt and mud, by means of wooden cases or frames, removable when the fabric is dry. But you see there some of the taby walls, for which they were formerly so famous; and they had then very strong mixtures for mortar and plaster—arts which are now almost lost here.

But they will make a water-mill out of timber that we should think insufficient for a stool. They will form a sort of bridge over a river with spart or bass ropes stretched across it, without any purchase but the main force of a number of hands; and though it drags in the water, it will carry some people and baggage, while the rest swim the horses.

And

And they make floats that carry over baggage, in a country where there is neither stick, stone, nor bush, with no other material but the skins of animals blown up with the mouth. The women weave tolerable coarse cloth without any loom, merely with pieces of reed.

But, as you may readily suppose, those works are all slowly and badly executed. They are now ignorant of all the first principles of philosophy and mathematics, and incapable of retaining such knowledge in the country, even if it were introduced. The few middling or bad methods they possess, are derived to them from undiscoverable antiquity, and are fixed by law and custom, beyond the power of improvement. Custom, which they respect as law, would of itself be sufficient to keep them as they are, without the help of despotism and the depopulation it produces.

Their towns are generally built of this dirt and taby, upon the very quarries of free-stone. Five hundred horse require a whole

whole day to pass a small river. It is singular, though not very delicate, to see the women working the paste for the *cuscus*\*, on the ground between their legs.

It is impossible to persuade them that our improvements can be of any use to them; and, prejudices apart, they are not perhaps always wrong in those opinions. The arts, the police of populous and polished nations, are not fit for hords of shepherds. They do not want to be taught to do things in less time or space, with fewer hands, or less force, while they have *time, space, and hands* enough. Neither men nor women will have occasion for our fine things, while the former are tyrants and the latter slaves.

But some of your own learned men dispute, and some deny, the advantages of science and **civilization**. The most absurd opinions will find partizans. Doubtless, the two extremes of *ignorance* and *refine-*

\* *Al cuscus*, is a granulated paste, the same as that of vermicelli.



*ment* have each their vices and their virtues, their *forts* and *foibles*. What we gain in one way, we must often lose in others; such is the fate—the law of our nature. The progress of certain vicious weaknesses may keep pace with that of knowledge; and the same causes, wealth and leisure, may contribute, at once, to the increase of vice, luxury, and science. The middle ranks of men may, in some cases, improve, while the two extremes of high and low, may both incline towards corruption and depravity. Yet, on the whole, we must believe, that man may live happier in a civilized and well-regulated community, than in a state of anarchy and rapine; and that the benefits of arts and improvements must be at least sufficient to reward that continual and laborious pursuit which we see always attending their progress.

In the decision of such questions, I believe it will be safer to attend to the opinions of those who have acted certain different parts and duties among men, than to  
such

such as only speculate over them at home by means of books. But indeed it probably requires the joint efforts of both theory and practice, to advance the great science of government only a few steps farther, with security. Hence the extreme rarity of that valuable being—a great *law-giver*,—not a lawyer. These two characters have seldom been joined.

## L E T T E R XII.

*Of political Innovations.—Foreign Travel.—  
Lawgivers.—Emperor.*

I N an inquisitive and improving age, we must expect every possible variety of opinion to be advanced and supported. In the course of this progress and variety, the increase of human knowledge and inquiry may often lead rather to doubt than to presumption. The wisest and oldest nations will know the most, and will therefore, perhaps, be most aware of innovations, and thence may be oftener too cautious, than in the other extreme of rash and inconsiderate; which last is more the characteristic of this Barbarian state of society. Your superior science and wisdom will have a tendency to produce more caution than enterprise. You know too well the danger of all extremes in any measures or principles; the impossibility of any rule being without exceptions; the power of custom

custom or habit, which is properly called second nature, and which it is therefore seldom prudent or practicable to change; so that the very wisdom of experience may lead towards the extreme of circumspection and timidity. An old foldier is often too cautious; and, were it not for some of those bold innovators in politics, who, with more spirit than knowledge, can carry whole nations on to new experiments, society would probably stand still, or go backwards.

I believe I was led into these reflections by something about these Moors, and their government; and by reading accidentally one of your over-wise and learned authors, who preaches against foreign travel, and thence against our learning any thing from other nations.

Now I am inclined to believe that it is only by mutual intercourse that nations improve, and that even our idlest and weakest ramblers generally bring home more good than evil from their travels; that they mostly either retain, or afterwards on reflection

flection acquire from thence, a something of utility, and more certainly a something of the *agreeable*, that serves to distinguish them from the common herd. Nay, without travel, I think we have seldom seen any man become very great in things of the first importance; and still less, any one become universally great. I have no idea of a man being fit for a legislator or a senator, without having travelled. And as to that first and most important character *before mentioned*, a *great lawgiver*, perhaps we cannot expect to see one again, while there is so little chance of the different excellencies of the human character being joined in one;—not till the great philosopher, the soldier, traveller, statesman, scholar, historian, poet, musician, &c. can again be found together and joined to the best heart. This was always a rare being among men; but now, with the minute separation of arts and professions—with our partial, tedious, inactive, unanimated, unfeeling kind of education, the production of such men is become quite improbable. There has not been perhaps above three or four really great lawgivers in  
in



in two thousand years:—a Lycurgus, a Solon, a Numa, and a Penn.

When we see the different kinds of vices prevailing in such varied degrees in the different countries we visit, and the gradual change of national characters, can we doubt the influence of education, of government, of manners? Or can we believe human nature or mankind to be always the same in all ages and nations? as some of our overlearned and wise would have us believe, as a very great and sage discovery.

I believe we must travel, were it only to unlearn the errors and nonsense that some of our books, and our bookish masters, may have taught us in our youth.

But we must not conclude a letter without mentioning our friend the Emperor. He seems still at times to repent of some of his harsh treatment of our Consul. He has shewn some displeasure towards the Moor and the Jew, who were his instruments in that business; and they may  
probably

probably yet receive some political and corporeal chastisement on that account, if those measures should ever be properly resented by our court; which he fears may yet be the case, in spite of all the comfort and encouragement you give him.

You must always expect him to go as far as ever he can with any chance of impunity; but he is, nevertheless, easily frightened. The French have lately silenced him by a spirited answer to one of his insolent messages. I think we make less use of our natural advantages than almost any other nation. Is not this from a want of sufficient knowledge of the character and secrets of other courts and nations? Are your ministers men who have travelled and resided in other countries?

But the rain, which seems to last for ever, continues to wet our paper, and every thing. All things here, as well as the houses, are in a more imperfect, insufficient, or ruined state, than you can ever there conceive without seeing.

## L E T T E R   XIII.

*The Improbability of Improvements.—The Spaniard in favour.—Our bad Policy.*

EVERY thing here wears a neglected, unfinished, and desolate appearance. The country seems only of late to have emerged a little from ruins, and now to be returning fast thither again. The footsteps of oppression are strongly marked throughout.

And there is no improving a country like this. Nothing can be done but by the Prince; and you see how improbable it is that any thing like a lawgiver,—a Peter the Great,—can ever be produced here—*on auroit beau precher*. What could move a Prince who feels nothing for his people, his fame, or his posterity, and who dreads the riches and population of his own country? How set about to reform a barbarous exclusive religion, and mitigate their  
 abhor-

abhorrence of Christians, which has been implanted as necessary to their existence, and to their conquests; and now, perhaps, too deeply rooted in their habits and customs, ever to be moved? The task of reforming or restoring such a people, seems too great for any man. It would not be forming a new nation, but mending an old one, which is here probably by far the most difficult of the two. He would have to undo, or reform himself, his court, the people, the government, and then to make up the whole anew from worse than nothing. Against the most inveterate prejudices, vices, idleness, ignorance,—the labour seems beyond the power of man.

Nothing above the rank of a workman can yet live, or be of any use here; and Hodge the mason may be of far greater service than a Duke de Riparda, or a Marquis de Viale.

Some acquaintance with the rude nations should be kept up among the civilized, though it will be more difficult to acquire

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than

than that of their polished neighbours, which may be tolerably procured without moving from home, by the help of books, society, commerce, travellers, resemblance; —all of which fail us here. Information we find so rare and difficult to procure, even of the next town. As to the Europeans settled in such countries, it is melancholy to see how soon their notions are confined and assimilated to the place, and how few ideas they have beyond their own business.

But ere I forget the news of the day.— This Emperor liberally gave to the Spanish Consul, the last audience, without ransom, eleven Spaniards his prisoners, whom he had bought of the Rifiens. It is only with *Carlos*, as he calls the King of Spain, that he is now on a truly attached and friendly footing. There is a change for you! What must this footing have cost Carlos? You should spare nothing to know the particulars; for from some of these much may always be drawn of future plans and intentions: the general plan or meaning is easily seen. At the  
same



same time he said he had given orders to his southern Bashaw to tell the Mountaineers to kill all the English who may be cast in, or come there, for the future. Fortunately they will not obey him, nor his Bashaw, especially while they have hopes of getting any thing for them at Santa Cruz, or Mogadore.

I am glad you now see the importance of keeping up a constant and perspicacious style of information and attention to the plans, views, powers, probabilities, &c. of your neighbours; I wish that kind of knowledge could be extended to others of our public men; but I fear we shall always be somewhat deficient in these, and our inadequate ideas of other countries but too often appear in our public measures. By means of *Gibraltar* and your *fleet*, you may always be of the first consequence here, and might manage this and some other countries as you please.

## L E T T E R XIV.

*Geographical and physical Ideas.—Cultivation. — Life. — Diseases. — Destruction. — Conjectures in Natural History.*

**I** HAVE now seen more of this country, toward the mountains behind it. A poor population, thin crops, and a want of skill, exertion, and industry, are too conspicuous throughout the whole. In some parts toward the skirts of the mountains (which is in most countries the best soil), and in some tracts of their plains, the land in tillage is rather extensive, in proportion to the few miserable inhabitants so thinly scattered over it. But they have little or no other labour; no fences, manures, fodder, gardens, houses, trees, nor roads, to mind, so that they will plow, or rather scratch, up a good deal of land with their trifling little plough, which is often without iron.

The

The plains run to sand in many places, and the best parts are generally but of a light and thin soil, which may be in a great measure owing to the want of cultivation and vegetation, and likewise to the want of water; a want that is but too general, I believe, throughout this great continent of Africa; and hence it must ever be but thinly peopled. From our knowledge of its coasts, and the few rivers, it is plain there must be much of its internal extent entirely without rivers, and therefore not habitable in those climates.

To form a general geographic idea of this kingdom, conceive a long slip of low country along this coast, from the Straits down to about 28 N. lat. where Atlas shoulders on the ocean. A branch of those mountains running northward behind this plain to Cape Spartel, helps to bound and cut it off from the rest of the continent. The few *rivers* (as you see in the map) that traverse this slip of country, do not improve it much, except in some places where they overflow. Not supplied by lesser streams, as elsewhere, in their course from the moun-

tains to the sea, this light land drinks up all the rain; they seldom produce any verdure even on their banks. Not a plant or shrub, nothing verdant to be seen, not so much as to mark the margin or course of the river; so that we may almost tumble into it, before we discover where it is.

There is something very dismal in these extensive brown flats, with almost as good a horizon as at sea, and without any green object within the distant view. The land seems to produce scarcely any thing but what is sown; and where any thing grows spontaneously, it is small of its kind. Though a fine climate, several of the Spanish forest trees are here only like shrubs. Both vegetable and animal life are in a weakly and unimproved state. One sees very little sign of animal strength or vigour, except in the horse, and that is but seldom, for this Emperor has sadly neglected and discouraged the breed of them. The camel, though large, is but a weakly, sheepish, and sluggish animal, and carries but a small load in proportion to his size. The fierce  
lions

lions and tygers are in the mountains, which, I suspect, are here at least the fittest habitations for man too.

The diseases most common here are agues, dropfies, itch, and other cutaneous disorders, often to a violent or leprous degree. Pray are not these the effects of poor blood, and of poor and nasty living?

But some of their land produces good grain, though their mode of husbandry gives but poor thin crops. Their being able lately to export some of it, is not so much a proof of their industry, as of a want of population to eat it. However, this exportation might be of service to the country, if the Emperor could let it alone, or manage it with common sense; both of which are quite improbable.

Towards the skirts of the mountains, which there form green hills, though many of them too sandy like the plains, we find more flocks, and some good land, and, I think, a better sort of people, and several kinds



kinds of good cattle, which it might be worth while to export, and to try by cross breeds in other countries. May not this peace and communication with Spain in time produce some good effects to both these countries at least? They want much to improve their breed of cattle in Spain.

There are different races of Mountaineers between this kingdom and Algiers, who acknowledge neither state, and I believe are almost independent. Some of them are called *Brebers*, and hence is supposed to come the name of Berberia. Those seem to be the oldest inhabitants, most like to the Mauritians of the Romans, and it is said some of them still call all Europeans or strangers by a name that sounds like *Romi*. This Emperor goes often against some of them, perhaps partly by way of exercising his troops; which would be a very good plan, if he had skill, exertion, and steadiness equal to it. But he makes no conquests, and only raises by force some accidental contributions. In those expeditions he has likewise a view  
to

to *destruction*, both in the countries through which he marches, and those he goes against. To impoverish, to depress the efforts, and destroy the effects of industry, is one of the grand secret objects of this species of government. His rabble of an army, and its followers, by the circuit they usually take on these occasions, most effectually perform the different offices of destruction, and may be said to eat up the country. These Mountaineers were probably the kind of inhabitants found here at the time of the Arabian or Mahomedan conquests. They seem more industrious, though a smaller race of people than those of the tent villages in the plains. They have fixed habitations, huts, and some little gardens.

This now streight low coast may formerly have been in a more concave, or indented and uneven line, and may have been filled up thus to a right line, by time and the sea: now without bays, headlands, or harbours, all the rivers forming bars at their entrances. There is only one  
good

good bay, *Woladia*, which might be made a good harbour, if you would help him to do it, which I think you ought, without scruple or fear.

Mogadore might likewise, perhaps, be improved, by assisting the islands with piers and jetties, &c. if it could be deepened by the help of the little river, or other means.

There are few hard bodies to be found; no marble, or ores, till we go back to the mountains. Most of the stone on the coast seems like newly hardened, or just cohesing sand, like that behind Gibraltar rock. Near Mequinez and Fez, the harder bodies begin to appear: their strata approach the surface, and, I suppose, form the great body of mountains that appear here in the distant view.

Some quarries of an indifferent kind of marble have been much worked near Mequinez, and last by Muley Ishmael, with his numerous Christian slaves, for his extensive

tensive and useless buildings here. Many of his half-made columns still lie about the quarries.

In the back parts of these plains, on approaching the hills, we passed by large tracts where the upper stratum consisted of what we call plum-pudding stone, often with earth or sand beneath. Must not this have come from the mountains? and do not all these things indicate these plains to be new country? But I mean to trouble you with very few of my *conjectures* in natural history; and the *particulars* would require more study, and a longer residence on purpose. Only let me observe, that I am inclined to think the land of this globe is increasing, and that the sea adds more to some coasts than it takes away from others, by operating on the bottom, and throwing it up. And all the earth that is above water, was raised by these two powers, *viz.*

1. By volcanoes and earthquakes breaking the upper strata of the globe, and throwing up some parts above water; and then,
2. The sea gradually throwing up materials,

taken

taken from the bottom as well as from other sides, or shores, against such volcanic projections as points or centres of formation or accumulation. I do not think the strata appear too much broken for this supposition, as some observe.



## L E T T E R XV.

*Sketches of the Population, Revenues, and Force of the Country.—Its Conquest or Colonization,—and Women.*

THERE are, I believe, some accounts of this country already published; but as I have hardly seen any of them, I must run the risk of repeating what may have been written before; especially in descending to particulars, in which I do not, however, profess to deal much.

The size of this kingdom, as far as the royal authority is known to reach, may be estimated at about fifty thousand square miles (England contains, I believe, forty-nine thousand); taking its length to the river Suz, or about Teradaunt, as nearly five hundred, and its mean breadth about one hundred.

The

The number of inhabitants it is difficult, or impossible, to know with any precision; though they might know it nearly by means of some taxes, and the Bashaws. But as they have very imperfect notions of large numbers, all information, where these are concerned, must be very uncertain.

At Tetuan and Mequinez we found situations from whence we could count the number of houses, pretty nearly, in the length and breadth, or of two crossing diameters. We found Tetuan contain about 1500 houses.

	People.
If 10 persons <i>per</i> house,                      -	15,000
Mequinez, somewhat less, but when the court is there, may be supposed	15,000
Fez, nearly two of Tetuan,                      -	30,000
Morocco, more than Mequinez,	20,000
All the other towns by information,	40,000
	<hr/>
Total inhabitants of the towns	120,000

By the best accounts of the most populous provinces, and comparing them with the others, we cannot make the whole population

tion of this kingdom amount to much above two million.

Of his *revenue* we can likewise only make some oblique inquiries and guesses, through the clouds of mystery and ignorance.

The duties of South Ports, last year,			
<i>viz.</i> of Santa Cruz, Mogodore,	Hard dollars.		
and Safée, about	-	-	200,000
North Ports, nearly the same			
(though much increased since			
open to Spain),	-	-	200,000
Bashaw of Duquela's country,			
nearly one-fourth of the whole			
kingdom, brought 120,000 × 4,			
or near	-	-	500,000
			<hr/>
			900,000

By the addition of presents, confiscations, robberies, his annual revenue may sometimes amount to nearly one million hard dollars, or two hundred thousand pounds.

But, excepting the Duquela provinces, the rest is, I believe, uncertain. He therefore wishes always to farm his ports; but I wonder he gets any body to take them, for it is obvious he means after all to fleece the farmer.

His navy now consists of about twenty vessels, the largest of twenty guns. You might, and perhaps should, help him to double that force, since he likes it. He cannot hurt *you* much; but he may be made a proper cheque on your enemies. And the efforts to be a naval and commercial power, might help to improve his country—if any thing could; and the improvement of this part of the world is certainly for your good.

His land-force is quite uncertain. Every man is supposed to be a soldier, and always ready; though far from being the case. Indeed every man here seems as fit as any other for any or every thing; each serves indiscriminately as horse, foot, sailor, artillery, officer, or private. As officers, he seems to appoint and reduce them from mere  
caprice,

caprice, and not by any fixed mode, or merit; as if to shew his power, and jealously avoid any fixed rule of conduct. Indeed, no command seems to give its possessor any rank or permanent authority. All are equally slaves to his caprices.

We may judge of his force and discipline by this late siege of Masaghan. He could not, after all his efforts, assemble above 50,000 men, taking it from the best reports; but all reports magnify here. They came straggling in for many days during the first of the siege; and before the end of it, two months and a half, they were reduced to one-fourth or one-fifth of their greatest number, all stealing away when tired. Indeed they cannot, in any great numbers, stay long in a place, the country and methods of providing being inadequate; but this being by the sea, he got supplied for his money, though with some difficulty and great expence. He had an enemy to contend with who hardly attempted to interrupt any of his clumsy operations either by sea or land.



Their wants are few, and from the few arts necessary to supply those wants more hands can be spared than with us. Half the able-bodied might perhaps take the field for a little time; whereas with us, I believe, one-eighth would be found too many to be spared from the arts and trades that are wanted in our state of society: but in theirs, the women, the aged, and the children, might nearly do the necessary work in this climate during most part of the year. Such a state, like some of the ancient republics, if it could be wisely governed and disciplined, might have great advantages, in national strength, over more polished and luxurious nations.

It is a great pity that the European powers are giving up or losing the places they held on this African coast, instead of gaining more, as I think they ought. Those places were a kind of military schools rather better than none; they produced some additional motives to military and national exertions; they served as some asylum, or hope for the escape of slaves and prisoners; and in this and several other ways were a  
kind

kind of check on these barbarians. The Portuguese, in their more flourishing days, very properly considered them in this light, and as a footing towards the formation of future colonies here; in which it is to be hoped some European nation will yet again succeed as well as the Romans.

It is, perhaps, in the principles of the present art of war, that ten thousand men, trained on purpose under a good general, might beat as many as could be brought into the field of such troops as these, provided they had first some experience in this kind of war; for without great precaution, our inexperience of barbarous armies and methods of war might expose us to some dangers at first, and to misfortunes that might prove decisive. Though our superior science, patience, and discipline, when skilfully employed, ought to give us great advantages over such a rabble, yet the general who attacks or invades any of these Barbary states ought to be very much on his guard at first, or his troops may be surprised. Astonished at their unusual modes of

attack; at the great agility of their horse in retreating, breaking, returning; at their horrid shrieks and yells, of which we can have no idea, as our lungs are incapable of such exertions from want of habit, we should be apt to give way, which would be decisive.

No modern nation has yet found the secret of making either war or peace with them to any advantage proportioned to the difference of science and discipline. It is amazing, I believe even to themselves, to see the nations of Europe, with all their superiorities, become so submissive and tributary to them. We seem to keep each other in countenance, and share the disgrace amongst us.

If Russia ever succeeds in her enterprises, and can get once fairly into the Mediterranean, she may shew us how to treat these piratical states; for she has the only troops sufficiently acquainted with such enemies, and she will probably be wise enough to keep up that knowledge by frequent wars. Any  
other

other power who may have occasion to attack them would perhaps do well to borrow a Russian general and some other of their officers.

To be conquered by a civilized and generous nation would be a happy event for these poor Africans. They have latterly been saved from it—we can hardly tell how, or why, when we consider the enterprising spirit of modern Europe. It has probably been owing to our exhausting wars with each other, and to those apparently greater objects of the Western and Eastern worlds, in search of gold. But it may justly be doubted, if those objects be greater? These northern parts of Africa are capable of all sorts of useful productions, of more value than gold, and nearer home.

It is not improbable that France may be approaching to a state of population and enterprise that may make such colonization and conquest occur and become necessary to her, or at least to join in such a scheme, if it should once become the fashion. And if her government can ever be steady enough, in any

H 4 system;

system; or if she should ever recover her constitution, which some of their speculative men think possible, and which I do not think probable; she would then be too powerful, and give law to Europe. Egypt ought, perhaps, to be the first country in Africa to be conquered and colonised from Europe, on account of its singular situation. Surrounded by deserts, it would be easily defended against all its neighbours. Wealthy, scientific, and disciplined nations, are not in these days to be conquered by crowds of barbarians: the modern expensive sciences of fortification, and war in general, form their security. Then the rest of the northern African coast might be gradually subdued and civilized by small colonies and good government. But it would require some of our Penns and Franklins to establish, or improve upon the English constitution here: only they must be warriors; that would be indispensable in this situation, and is generally so in every great character. Neither the government nor character of the French will answer for colonization. I believe the legislator for these countries should be born  
in



in England, or in English America; and yet he must likewise be well acquainted with the European, the Asiatic, and African nations, of which his subjects would here consist; and he must be a great soldier—ignorant of nothing. These and other requisites seem to me indispensable in the character of a great lawgiver, and must render it the rarest character upon earth.

Portugal, in the times of her spirit, wisdom, and glory, during the reigns of her Johns and Emanuels, attempted conquest and colonization here too; and with great success, considering the times and circumstances. By a little more wisdom, steadiness, and discipline;—with less jealousy, and more assistance from Ferdinand of Aragon, she might have fixed a colony in this country. Now, it is perhaps only to be accomplished by the united force of different states, as it has been prevented by their mutual jealousies.

Perpetual war is probably the true spirit of Mahomedism; and when they cease to be

conquerors, they are nothing, their government being unfit for the arts of peace. It is only war, or some such powerful motive of necessity, that can induce them to move with any order or exertion. So that, whenever the European nations can agree about the measures and consequences, they may probably do what they please with both the European and African Mussulmans. Perhaps it may be brought about without France, or at least without her taking the lead in those conquests. When Austria and Russia can agree, and can satisfy France and Prussia, and get fairly to the Mediterranean, then Greece, and others, both new and old countries, may flourish, those seas may regain their former importance, and these fertile African coasts become again the granaries of the world. There is no apparent revolution arising in the horizon of future probability, of more importance to this part of the world, and to the improvement of mankind, in that of their commerce, population, arts, and industry. The practicability and utility of such measures may be perceived from the  
history

history of Carthage, of Rome, and of Portugal. These countries have always received colonies, and have been improved by them; it is of consequence, that they should come from the most improved nations. Mahomedan conquest from Asia having spread itself along this fine African coast, and its being left there so long to degenerate, and then to infest and plague the rest of the world, is a great shame to polished Europe. But she must probably, in time, recover and assert her natural superiority here too, as the Mahomedan power of itself declines. If we had been better and more liberal politicians, we might have hastened those events, by giving Minorca to Russia, and thereby, perhaps, more effectually securing to ourselves a share of the beneficial consequences.

When governments shall have learned to act on great and liberal principles, and shall have taught mankind to tolerate and enrich each other, Mahomedans may make better subjects when subordinate than when in power. Those who were left in Spain and Portugal

Portugal were, and would probably have continued, very good subjects, if those governments had known how to treat them. Here the natives, the people in general, might be brought to join against their present rulers, notwithstanding their religion.

These political speculations I think of importance, and you must have them as they occur. This state of barbarism (as we may affect to style it), and their wilful ignorance of our arts and fancied improvements, may not be so improper for poor and mountainous countries, in some parts of the world; but it is surely a pity, that such rich and improveable plains, so near to us, should remain in a condition so depopulated, and in such poor cultivation, lost, as it were, to mankind. The Romans thought so of these countries, and acted from that principle.

You know the women are jealously guarded, and are seldom seen here, except some of the lowest, the domestic, and aged; but all of them are then covered up to  
the



the eyes with woollen, and over the face some dirty rag marked and sullied with the breath, and only the eyes to be seen in ghastly stare. They are generally inclined to be fat and short, and have an odd, and to us a most ungraceful, appearance; round, shapeless woollen bundles, moving along; certainly neither very cleanly nor desirable, at least according to our taste.

Where women are thus considered only as domestic slaves, and marriage as a kind of purchase, they can have no weight or influence in society, which therefore can hardly be polished or improved. By this exclusion of the sex, there will not remain sufficient motives, means, nor uses for introducing the agreeable arts; and we know that the agreeable and the useful arts are mutually connected and must assist and produce each other.

Nations halt or stop at different stages of civilization. In the East, society has been  
stopped



stopped and fixed always at too early a stage of its progress, *viz.* during the periods while women were yet considered as a kind of private property, or plunder: and so it threatens long to remain over a great part of the earth—an eternal disgrace to human nature.

## L E T T E R XVI.

*Of the rude and civilized State.—Of Education.—Comparative Remarks.*

SEVERAL other things would be necessary, so as to make the most of a journey into this country, and render it somewhat more agreeable both to you and me: such as being better provided for travelling and encamping; a friend or two for conversation, and to promote reflection, with the habits and leisure for writing; a longer residence to examine the different parts, if worth the time and trouble, of which, at times, I have my doubts. However, such countries might produce as many new and original observations as the more refined and improved nations, though these furnish but melancholy pictures of human nature.

If such was the simplicity and happiness of the Golden Age, *dio ce ne liberi*:  
though

though our disapprobation or disgust may be little more than a confession that their vices and errors are different from ours, and that the inhabitant of polished Europe, with his present numerous wants, must shudder at the idea of returning to the naked and forlorn state of barbarian society. But in this, they may probably be even with us; and on each side of those straits, the mutual dislike and contempt may be equally strong. But it is not so much the want of luxuries, as of virtue and freedom, which always grow up together, that would here disgust the liberal mind. Where no man is looked upon, nor expected to be honest, friendly, or generous, it is in vain to look for such virtues. Those cannot so easily be produced, even by the best institutions, and cannot be expected to arise spontaneously without culture or encouragement, and still less where there is neither use, motive, nor demand for them.

When we look to Europe, and consider your superior motives and opportunities to virtue, activity, and knowledge, we should  
expect

expect your people to be better and wiser, and farther before these, than they really are. More vices and errors seem to grow up with science and civilization, than have yet been well accounted for.

In Europe, the wisest among you seem to look up to laws more than to the form of your government or legislatures, for every thing, and consider the impartial execution of those laws, as the most perfect state of freedom and happiness. It may be so with your present moral powers and character. But laws alone seem insufficient to make men what they ought to be, unless they tend more effectually than yours to improve your manners, morals, and education—your good discipline, habits, and industry. But some of your rulers, and over-wise men, think that the people ought to be kept in ignorance and poverty, in order to make them work. If your governments and state of society cannot add some other better motives or means to produce labour and virtue, it is a confession of great debility or ineptitude, or worse. I must ever think those principles

and opinions to be wrong and erroneous, proceeding from the fearful indolence and ignorance of tyranny. In the most industrious, and hence the most happy countries that I have seen, the people were the farthest removed from ignorance and poverty. I should beware of giving men of such opinions much influence in any system of education, legislation, or police, if I did not know the small effects our speculative and doubtful opinions have on our conduct, except a few of the honest Quixots or enthusiasts, characters likewise very necessary in society.

I should be for your bestowing more honour and respect on those who educate your children; and should endeavour to throw that business into the hands of genius, —of men of the first-rate character and abilities, who would prefer the pleasure of forming real and useful men, according to truth and nature, to the unnatural toil of marring or modelling them into particular sects of spoilt or artificial beings.

Those



Those monkish fraternities called universities, are too ancient in their institution, modes, and methods. No human establishment can last so long without more frequent reforms, and even total renovations. Though they have been forced to follow, in some degree, the changes of times, the old leaven still too plainly appears. Originally established solely for educating churchmen, they seem now as if intended to render learning of difficult, instead of easy acquisition, and to keep useful knowledge out of sight. But I think they will be forced to improve still farther, both in matter and method; and the necessity of a more manly and direct education, must in time appear, —one of more general and more useful knowledge, habits, and abilities.

Here, there is no hope of amelioration of any kind. They are past all the periods of improvement: to become stationary, is the utmost that can be expected of them. No traces of their former learning appear. Of the library at Fez, we can learn nothing, but that no such thing exists now there:

and even the emperor himself seems jealous of letting us enquire farther. Yet we may see that these people are naturally studious, and rather grave and persevering; so that they might perhaps be made to learn again, if they had sufficient encouragement by good government, liberty, and security. In the sea-ports, we have seen them play chess, but not in the inland parts; they are there probably too miserable even for that degree of ease, or *descanso*.

You see I am still interested about you Europeans, though I had begun to feel as if almost an African myself. But many things now conspire to turn the mind, like the needle, perpetually to the north; and we look towards home with a longing eye, in some compound ratio of the distance and time of absence. It is interesting to observe the effects of approaching home on some of our party, who have been many years absent in slavery, poverty, and distress.

Hardly any thing in this country can now fix our attention. I suppose we must now  
first

first get to *that* side, before we can attend to *this*. In the mind's eye, we see fair Europe all green and beautiful, and this all black and brown: the one advancing, and the other standing still, to be left still farther out of sight. Hope and imagination go on to gild the distant and future prospect of your improvements, and can see in your increasing motives to activity and research, the treasuring up a stock of useful knowledge for the benefit of posterity and of mankind; while these naked and forlorn regions are long likely to remain the same; and each generation of men, like those of other animals, go on like the last, without an idea of change or improvement in the species or individual, or in any of the useful or agreeable arts of life.

Such are my romantic dreams among the now naked skirts of Atlas, where once flourished a populous and cultivated Roman colony. They serve to amuse in this now worse than solitude.

## L E T T E R    XVII.

*A political Reverie.*

AS I do not at present intend to trouble you much more about business or travels from hence, I send you another of my waking dreams or reveries, suggested by our present situation among these poor Barbarians.

You know I have formerly imagined, with others, that we might improve these people. Indulging in that idea, I have supposed myself a leader of a rude nation, formed of the *shepherds* of some plains, no matter where, and the *hunters* of neighbouring mountains; fancying that some advantages might be made to accrue from mixing those two different stages of society, by retaining some of the best parts of each, in order to carry them on to the next stage of *cultivators*.

I had



I had at length prevailed on them to remain attached for some time to a fine country, consisting of plains, rivers, mountains, and to consider it as their home during the best parts of the year, though they could not all at other seasons entirely give up their habitual occupations of hunting, and sometimes going to war with their neighbours. I had got them to attempt, with some success, the raising of corn and pulse, with the management and saving of some grafs, and other indigenous plants, for themselves and their cattle; and had gradually brought them to see the uses of some fences and divisions of the land; and then, by degrees, to feel the advantages of having houses, and little gardens for raising more food for themselves: and from those first rude ideas of fixed property, we were going on forming fixed villages, and had marked out some districts of land to each.

I appointed a certain number of the most intelligent and leading men to meet me, having long meditated, and prepared them for, a free and confidential conference. The



following were the heads or meaning of some things I endeavoured to explain to them:

“ Friends and companions,

“ After all our various successes and labours in war and in peace, and our confidential conversations, you are now, I believe, still more confirmed in the truth of what I have generally foretold, and of my real intentions for the general good; you have therefore submitted to my command and advice, as well as from an opinion of my superior skill and conduct; I wish now to confirm you still farther in your late wise resolutions to improve, shewing you an evident increase of your happiness with that of your industry; for these always go together. Some of you are now accustomed to consider those great objects of population, discipline, form of government, national greatness, which likewise depend on each other. Let us keep those objects in view, and go straight forward, guided by the maxims we have so often considered. Most of all depends on your form of government

vernment or constitution, which we must go on gradually to improve; dividing the business and authority, for which the people have been accustomed to look only to me, yet more distinctly and methodically among you all, while I retain only those parts that are absolutely necessary for union, for expedition, force, and in short for the good of the whole.

“ We have, you see, at length succeeded in persuading many of our people to cultivate the earth; and they already perceive it may be made to produce much more for food and clothing than their practice of hunting, or of negligently attending their poor and wandering flocks. You begin to see some of the precautions necessary to our success in this settled way of life. Our keenest hunters have now their seasons of labour, which were formerly those of idleness; their flocks multiply, and all subsist through the different seasons.

“ In the few nations you know, and in others whose history you will now learn,  
you

you will see that their dangers, difficulties, and want of success, have generally proceeded from their not changing their mode of government, laws, and manners, so as to keep pace with their change of situation. These things have seldom been carried on together, but have left each other behind. The same motives and principles of necessity, of mutual assistance, that brought men first to live and act together, and the few laws that could unite and regulate them in the woods and in the field of war, have proved inadequate to the regulation of towns and villages, when property, riches, arts, pleasures, and inequalities, came to increase.

“ We must go on endeavouring, by degrees, to get the people to continue submissive to the authority, or at least to follow the advice, of the chiefs and elders of the villages, in peace as well as in war, by giving them the election of those in a proper form and rotation; carefully securing the obedience of those chiefs or elders, by giving them an interest and a share in the  
national

national government. The institutions, the care and management of these smaller divisions of the people, are of the first importance. On that foundation must be built the whole fabric of your government and of your success.

“ Let us then form a few simple and plain laws and regulations, call together those heads of villages, when properly elected, and propose these things to their approbation; habituate them thus to think and speak on public affairs; and let them at least seem to chuse how they will be governed.

“ Let us then determine who shall think for the whole and advise, who shall approve, and in short the form of your legislature, and of whom it shall consist, so as to include the interest of all as near as may be. We shall then regulate our conduct as legislators in making laws, distinguishing the fixed and permanent from the temporary and experimental, and then decide who shall judge and apply them, and who shall put them in execution; for these  
must



must be distinct offices. Various difficulties will here doubtless arise, which you must wait to determine by patience and experience; but if we can keep the chief objects constantly in view, go directly to them, and not suffer ourselves to be embarrassed by needless distinctions and refinements, we shall make a greater progress, and avoid many errors, troubles, and difficulties, into which other nations have fallen. You know one another, and will readily enough fix on the fittest persons for each office, when once we have assigned and distinguished the duties of each.

The method of one or two persons representing a whole district annually in our legislature, you will find to be convenient, full of beneficial consequences, and a source of great improvements. Whether all should have a voice in choosing those representatives according to their property, or each have one vote, and then property give additional votes, you will determine by experiment, leaving this and every subject open to improvement. It is doubtless just to  
consult



consult all in what concerns all; but as that will become daily more impracticable, it will be nearly the same in all, and even better in some, cases, by means of representation, which is one of the happiest discoveries that ever was adopted, but which is not yet well understood anywhere. By this, and every other means, we must keep up the lower and industrious classes of the people in all their due weight and importance in the state; for they are always too apt to let themselves fall into dependance, and thence into neglect, contempt, and oppression; and then they have recourse to violence and destruction, in order to redress themselves—but they know not how. They cannot take their own part, as they form a body which cannot move without doing mischief. They must act only by their representatives.

“ If this degree of order and regularity can once be accomplished, the nation may then go on in a continual progress, and each generation improve upon the experience of the former; though they must  
never

never expect to arrive at perfection. A nation is a strong and coarse machine, and must not be too nice, nor embarrass itself with too many laws and regulations to remedy little evils which are inherent in human nature. For example: after the experience of ages, the wisest men of the wisest nations could not probably compose your legislature so that the interest of all should always be considered, or where that of some individuals or sets of people may not sometimes prevail beyond their due share. Such evils as these, and many others, must be remedied as they arise. Though the interest of the whole, and of each individual, is always to be comparatively considered and estimated; though public measures and necessary improvements will gradually require more thought, knowledge, and regulation; yet you must carefully avoid making your laws and government too complicated, but preserve the whole in that simple and plain state so as to be easily understood by all. Simplicity is not to be sacrificed to trifling amendments. A wheel too  
much

much will spoil any machine. While you make few laws, and trust each other, you will exercise and strengthen the best parts of your nature, a certain confidence and benevolence; and you will at least be longer in becoming unworthy of that trust. By numerous laws and precautions to protect us against our brethren, we nourish the selfish and malevolent dispositions, which are too apt to grow up as arts and society advance.

“ It requires some skill and reflection to hit the right medium in the legislative institutions and executive government, so that the last may not be too slow, nor the former too quick; neither over-cautious or litigious, on the one hand; nor too variable, capricious, or precipitate, on the other:—though the first is probably the safest of the two extremes. The form we are about to establish will, I think, nearly answer these conditions.

“ I have often explained to you the numerous advantages of committing the execution

cution of your laws and regulations to one person only,—a chief, supported by the will or force of the whole, with full powers for the ready execution of every law; but in the manner likewise prescribed by the legislature, and under control sufficient to prevent his going beyond them. Though that degree of control may not always be so easily found as imagined, for it is difficult to give power enough to do good, and yet prevent that power from doing harm sometimes; you will be shewn the methods hitherto practised for that purpose, upon which you may improve.

“ Your laws of succession and inheritance, and of transferring property, must be well considered, and carefully preserved from becoming intricate and complicated, to which they will be subject as you improve. In most cases of doubt or dispute, an arbitration of neighbours properly chosen, will at once serve to settle the case, and shew you the best way of forming such bodies to judge of your differences and offences, to improve your police, arts, regulations, &c.

“ It



“ It is of great importance to fix in time the mode of succession and inheritance, and especially the succession of your chiefs. The plainest and easiest, you will probably find to be that by birth and primogeniture; and you will have an equal chance of getting as good chiefs in this way as in any other, especially if you take proper precautions in their education when young, and have their duties marked out by fixed laws and forms when in years, and in office.

“ How much of your property must be taken for the use of the public, for the good of the whole, you will be able in time to discover. It will vary with your situation, character, and improvements: hence avoid granting too much, or for too long a time. The honest and vigilant administration or expenditure of the public money, is perhaps one of the most difficult tasks in society, and hence highly meritorious: render it not more difficult by the want of order; diminish the temptations and opportunities to fraud, by controls and rotation.



“ You must travel, and learn from other nations, taking advantage of their superior knowledge and experience. With some of those you will do well to keep up a constant communication and friendship, but without catching their follies and vices. You may learn as much by their errors, as by imitating their wiser institutions; but you may learn some useful arts, the cultivation of more plants of utility, the use of more tame animals, and of some other metals besides your iron and copper. From the nations whence these come, you may get others, and may learn other useful arts; but you must imitate them with great caution in their complicated systems of laws, politics, learning, religion; in their notions of good and evil, of virtues and vices. From their numerous, perplexing, and idle books on these subjects, your wise men may be able to select some few good things; from a hundred volumes may perhaps be extracted one or two fit for you.

“ You will probably find that those wise and polished nations in Europe have  
 8 gone

gone the oftenest and farthest wrong in the things that concern them most, as in their religious, and in much of their civil policy; and in their ideas and regulations concerning women, and the connection of the sexes.

“ In the first, they have too frequently permitted the fearful and superstitious disposition of man to carry him too far, often into habits in which he lost the original feelings and sentiments of nature and of society, without gaining any new ones of sufficient, or of any beneficial influence on his conduct. Fear, a constant sense of danger, and of the utility of mutual assistance, having been observed as the most powerful motives to union, those fears have been artificially kept alive after the dangers or original reasons for them ceased to exist; so that by fear and ignorance men were easily made and continued superstitious, and thereby more readily frightened out of their money, and into subjection to other designing men. But this would have been no great evil, if the people had been left to

K 2
their

their choice in the kinds and degrees of superstition; but when government came to be so ill advised as to take a part in their quarrels, and to espouse and protect a particular sect, and to force and bribe people into it, then all liberty of opinion was lost, equity and justice were injured, and people thenceforward hated and persecuted each other for mere difference of opinion, or for being born in a different country.

“ In our case, though we cannot at once relax *all* the original bonds of union and good behaviour, we may surely set them free from *some* of the most oppressive superstitious fears, if not too late; and keep it in view gradually to set them free from others, as we can apply to other principles in the mind, of a more pleasant and more useful nature. The temporary regularity of a timid subordination, is too trifling an advantage, if it is one; and after a certain period is unnecessary, and perhaps injurious to human nature. This superstitious disposition, you already see, may be so indulged and increased, as to create imaginary dangers

dangers and invisible powers without end. Let us rather try to stop or mitigate it, if not gone too far. Let us venture by degrees to teach them nearly the naked truth, and gradually banish every superstitious practice, and retain only the worship of the *One great, but unknown, Spirit*. I have formerly thought myself obliged to make use of this superstitious disposition, perhaps oftener than necessary, from want of opportunities, and perhaps of abilities, to find better motives. Let us make amends by banishing those selfish fears for better and more benevolent sentiments; for the seeds of both are in us, and either may be cultivated.

“ As to the intentions of the Great Spirit concerning ourselves and this universe, you will be able to learn nothing from the polished Europeans or Asiatics, that you can understand. Permit men individually to form what opinions they please concerning these, and all things. The only care of government is, to see that they tolerate, and do not torment nor injure each other about

K 3 . opinions.

opinions. You must therefore beware of their forming religious and other permanent communities on partial or selfish principles, inimical to others or to the whole, and becoming then too powerful to be controlled. The most natural smaller communities, of which the great one, the nation, consists, are those of families; and you will be cautious of the too great pre-eminence even of any of those, and still more, of admitting of other more powerful associations without proper regulations.

“ Of the *policy*, internal and external, of the different European nations, of which we have so often talked, you will be able to learn some things. Your wise men will collect such parts as are applicable to you, from those nations that have preserved some of their natural liberties, and who endeavour to obey only the laws, and those of their own making: though none of them have been able to accomplish or execute that plan. You will find that their laws are becoming too numerous and complicated, and without attaining the object; inconsistent,



consistent, inadequate to the purposes intended, and most of them unfit for you. However, you will see where they have failed, from which you may learn much, as well as from their lesser laws of policy and regulation in towns and country.

Nations, and all separate bodies of men, are apt to be unjust and cruel to each other. Try to preserve yourselves from this, as far as practicable, even in spite of the injustice and provocation of your neighbouring nations: mixing much with them by marriage and commerce, you may then contribute to reform the world, and incline them all to justice and to peace; but by being always prepared for war—I fear it is, at times, unavoidable.

“ Perhaps your most powerful enemy is your own climate,—too good, too temperate, and furnishing too few difficulties to struggle with. The hardy inhabitants of the colder regions have generally subdued those of the warmer and more fruitful. You must therefore diligently keep up and

K 4                      improve

improve your warlike arts and exercises, though you should never go to war. Much may be done in this, by making a proper use of your mountains and mountaineers, carefully keeping them united—making but one people with the rest in government, by intermarriages—employing them in your service—sending the children of the plains to be brought up and educated among them.

“ We must continue to make our punishments milder and more certain. The sense of shame is powerful. By timely management, even disgrace may at length be almost sufficient to restrain your people, nearly as much as they can be restrained; for we must always expect some vices and weaknesses:—They are unavoidable, and perhaps even necessary in the whole of human affairs.

“ Parents, assisted by the wisest and best among you, will love and educate the youth, or rather encourage and help them to educate themselves. Nourish and exercise  
the

the habits and passions you know to be the most necessary. Gradually induce them to think, to speak little and well; teach writing, numbers, geometry, mechanics, to all, in the easiest and most direct manner; these you will find applicable to many and essential uses. Then teach them the *nature of things*, verbally and experimentally, in the shortest manner, always with a view to utility, as well as to satisfy curiosity. In all these you will find the experience and discoveries of the European nations of infinite use to you, and from them your wise men who travel will extract and abridge many useful things. Exercise and form the judgment of youth as early as practicable; in this you will find numbers and geometry of great utility. Preserve the utmost freedom in speaking and writing, and you will improve in both, and in every faculty, science, and institution.

Nor must you neglect the early knowledge and practice of poetry and music. These are the language of the heart, as words form that of the head or understanding. You  
have

have long experienced the pleasure, the sentiments which they inspire, and begin to perceive how greatly they may yet be improved and heightened; indeed they may probably be applied to great moral purposes.

“ Though you very wisely preserve your habits of war and discipline, as far as practicable in peace, beware of going to war, or of conquering more territory; for you have already sufficient, with cultivation, to maintain ten times your present numbers. Perhaps you had better give up part of it, and come to live nearer together, extending again by degrees as you increase. You would then more effectually assist, enlighten, and improve each other.

“ A perfect equality will now be more impracticable than ever. You must differ in rank, estimation, and influence, according to your different degrees of merit, abilities, industry, and riches; and then by birth. Only guard against the two great and dangerous inequalities, which you will find sufficiently difficult:—it may be partly accomplished—

complished perhaps by limiting and dividing inheritances; and by marking well the bounds of the powers you give. No one must have power over another more than you may please by the laws to grant, taking care that even *that* be always the least that will answer the purpose. Some public festivals might perhaps be instituted to good effect, with certain ceremonies, amusements, and exercises, that might serve, among other purposes, to put you frequently in mind of your original and natural equality, in imitation of some former wise nations. The inculcating, by a frequent revival, this sense of original equality, is perhaps among the best effects of your religion and religious festivals.

“ The third, and I had almost said your most important care, will be to regulate the connection between the sexes.

“ On visiting other countries for information, you will find a great variety of opinions, of laws and institutions on this matter; and will find the oldest and wisest nations



nations as if at a loss how to consider the sex, in what rank to place, or how to employ them. You yourselves have perhaps been among those who are the farthest wrong in this, and the wisest and most improved nations cannot serve as examples to set you right: perhaps the ultimate perfection of which society is capable, awaits only the proper and relative employment of the two sexes. You will therefore, as yet, be cautious of great changes or innovations, and leave that connection as free as the public order can possibly admit; permitting to all above a certain age, to form what engagements they please with each other, before the magistrate, securing the execution of such contracts, and supporting the weaker sex in those ideas of a natural equality in rights with us, which you have now generously admitted; gradually diminishing the former exorbitant authority and superiority of husbands, and supporting the additional influence you have given to parents over their children till the age of marriage.

“ You

“ You will probably find from experience, that monogamy and marriages for life, are more convenient and beneficial to the public and to your present system, than polygamy and temporary engagements. It may perhaps be gradually introduced by some encouragement proportioned to the object, better than by compulsory laws.

“ The safety and education of the offspring is what concerns the public most; and you may for that purpose be forced, in your new situation, to lay some additional restraints and duties on all the parties, on husbands, wives, parents, children: only let these, and every other change, be introduced gradually, and let them be no more than absolutely necessary to your views, and not merely to indulge the selfish tyranny of man, which will be apt to increase as he advances in arts and luxuries, without some timely precautions both in restraints and exertions. Human beings will generally become tyrants when not controlled. Laws, for example, made by men for the women, but without consulting them, will generally  
be

be tyrannical. Be not afraid nor ashamed to give to the sex their natural and equal share of influence in families, in society, in the state. Let them continue to share in your labours and exercises, and to be still manly and strong, and to be above all foolish shame, and other weaknesses, when necessary. Teach them all you know. They will teach your children in their turn, and will be found of great use in education, manners, taste, arts. You already begin to find them more useful and agreeable as companions, assistants, and counsellors, than formerly as slaves and domestics.

“ You have already some women whom you may consult on any subject; and by confidential and proper treatment, you will soon render many more worthy of being consulted. But beware of all extremes: avoid that of your neighbours, who treat the sex like beasts of burden; and that of some European nations, who promote an over-weening delicacy and refinement that indulges in weak and wild fancies without end, and spoils and debilitates  
both

both sexes. There they pretend to love women for their follies and weaknesses, timidity and bad nerves, over-modesty and reserve, all which are almost dignified into virtues; whereas compassion is the most they can claim. Education will soon correct all their defects in knowledge and understanding, and habit maintain them in strength, courage, and freedom.

“ We are not so much to follow, as to assist, or rather improve upon, nature. Avarice, envy, and the other hurtful passions, are not to be cultivated because they are natural. Neither the brutal force and tyranny of man, nor the natural weakness and timidity of women, are to be indulged and increased because they are found in human nature. In short, passions hurtful or inconvenient, are to be repressed and modified by education and habit: such is the intent of society. In visiting the great cities of Europe, and those of Asia, you will see examples of those opposite extremes. On your wisdom will depend the choosing some  
medium.

medium or different path. It will be our own faults if the women do not keep up with us, and be found of signal use to us in almost every thing, except perhaps in war; and even there, you are already in the habit of consulting them: many of them have been known to counsel, and some even to command well. But whenever you begin to spoil each other, and to refine so far as to abhor masculine or learned women, like some in Europe, you will then probably soon begin to shrink from your duty, civil and military, and fall a prey to some other northern nation.

“ In the history of nations, you will see how manners and opinions have changed to opposite extremes. You may contemplate Spartan mothers exciting their sons to war and glory; and some modern European mothers dreading to expose theirs—even to the weather.

“ The nation that shall first introduce women to their councils, their senates, and seminaries of learning, will probably accelerate



rate most the advances of human nature in wisdom and happiness. You may safely give the sex the lead in every thing that concerns your pleasures, and they will economise and improve both yours and their own, in a variety of ways which you know nothing of as yet. You will soon perceive the importance of their taste and influence in every thing ornamental; in all the arts which you will now see arise from wealth and leisure; in every thing that can produce either sensual, or elegant and refined, pleasures. If you dignify their character by a free and manly education, and keep them to a near resemblance with yourselves, they in return will temper and refine your minds and your manners, and without the danger of rendering you, or your sons, too effeminate; so that you will meet half-way, and, being more alike, and better acquainted than formerly, objects of intercourse will multiply, and you will be fitter company for each other.

“ The powers that are given us by nature, are certainly intended to be used and

improved: the proper ways and means so as to produce the greatest happiness, are left to ourselves to discover and apply, for which the other sex is a necessary party concerned, and our natural counsellors and assistants. *That* happiness must consist in the proper use and management of the powers of *labour*, of *thought*, and of *pleasure*; but the application and success require the joint efforts of both sexes.

“ Continue to go every seventh day to your temples in those beautiful groves among your mountains. There, under the direction of your bards, and of your wise and good men and women, accompanied by your harps and flutes, rejoice and sing praises to the Great Spirit. There perform your hymns and dances (over which your chosen women preside by turns) to the memory of the great and good of both sexes, whom you have so wisely chosen to commemorate.

“ Let *that* be a day of happiness, and by such means try to banish every contrary practice

practice and idea. Indulge in every exercise and pleasure that your directors shall pronounce to be innocent, and in the forms and manner that they may chuse to prescribe; and endeavour gradually to abolish every other superstitious practice, and especially those of a horrid, dismal, or cruel tendency. The Great Spirit and Governor of the Universe cannot delight in your misery, but in your happiness.

“ You will learn from other nations, and your own practice, to build more beautiful temples, and to adorn them; and will learn more pleasing songs, and improve your music:—all within the bounds of elegant and sublime simplicity. By the wisdom of your directors, whom you will implicitly obey, you will be taught how to be cautious of indulging in the extremes either of ornaments or of pleasures.

“ The search of the *best*, or of *truth*, in every thing, is an eternal approximation, but which can never terminate in this world; and the way to farther improve-

ment and discovery, must ever be left open. As you increase your wants, and then come to supply them with more ease, and then to find time for experiment, reflection, and speculation, you will begin to perceive the importance of securing open and direct roads to truth and knowledge; and you must therefore be watchful to prevent any set of people from shutting any of them up on pretence of the enquiry being finished, and no more to be discovered; or on any other pretext.

“ I shall leave you some general directions, with some laws and regulations for a future period; some short histories of nations that have erred and gone to ruin; the methods of discovering useful knowledge by means of experiment and mathematics, which you will find of great use. But other things must first be attended to, *viz.* the smaller and domestic concerns. The lesser divisions of villages and families must all be carefully attended to, and be properly placed and employed; and then the larger and natural divisions of the country by  
*rivers,*



*rivers*, a certain number of which form the nation. In future times, your laws, civil and criminal, must increase with your property and improvements; and then will be the important time that will require all your skill and wisdom, and all may prove insufficient, as has been hitherto the case with most nations. There is a period between the rude and civilized state, in which nations generally sow the seeds of their own destruction. I mean to collect all the directions and remedies I can for you, against that period. The first and chief precaution seems to be that of restraining the busy spirit of legislation and regulation that will then arise, and that seems to seize all nations so soon as they can write and reason a little. Let your laws increase very slowly. Bear long with the *evils*, and beware of the *remedies*, till well assured of these being the lesser evils. Depend mostly on education as long as you can.

“ By these, and some other lessons to be explained, and others which I shall leave behind me, this nation may escape many



of the misfortunes that have befallen others. The directions of one who has seen so much more of the road you have to go than any of you, may certainly be made of service to the whole; not so much in quickening your progress, as in directing it aright. That progress must be slow, and requires a certain time; there are steps which you cannot overleap; but I may help you to shorten the way, and point out the objects to be kept in view for that purpose, either in your travels, experiments, or other researches; or in your moral, learned, and political institutions.”

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I told them a great many more particulars than I chuse to trouble you with, or can now remember. You may perceive it is incomplete as a system, and may think it perhaps incoherent and impracticable. The chief doubt of its practicability proceeds, perhaps, from its being too rational: but we must recollect that neither *reason* nor *women* have yet had their full and proper influence in the world; and till they come nearer to that point, we can only guess at their power.

## L E T T E R XVIII.

*Political Opinions and Advice.*

I AM obliged to you for putting me in mind. I did intend to give you some more memorandums of this country, moral and political; but as their importance seems to diminish as our departure approaches, I fear many of them are forgotten.

This Emperor, though of an indolent disposition, like most of his countrymen, is nevertheless of an anxious mind, a restless and perpetual negociator; and he means never to let you rest, more than his own subjects: you must be always expecting some embassy, message, or demand from him. When every thing else seems to be settled, he will probably make some alteration, on your duties, and may double them at once, though you already think them too high. That will occasion fresh negotiations,

tions, embassies, presents; all of which seem to be as the necessaries of life to him; and he will generally take care to create motives and occasions for them.

In dealing with these people, there can hardly be any general rule of conduct. They are generally both capricious and deceitful. We must follow them as well as we can, and, like themselves, go on with temporary shifts, and take occasional measures, as it were from hand to mouth. You have put up with affronts enough to show that you do not mean to quarrel with him, so that you must expect many more affronts and demands.

He has been more afraid of you than of any other power, which he will not readily forgive. He will probably take every occasion to show that you are not now his *only friends*, as heretofore; and he seems highly pleased at having escaped out of that situation. He desired the interpreter to tell me the other day, *apropos* to nothing, that the pride of the English is soon to be taken  
down;

down. We know the Bourbons have been telling him so, and will be attentive to keep him up in that hope and idea. Indeed most nations are now vying with each other for the highest place in his favour, and the chief object of all is, to supplant us; and they will now easily succeed. We are all his tributaries. Such is the disgraceful policy of the times with regard to these piratical states, and which may last till some event shall happen to make us all ashamed of ourselves. Nations are not ashamed to follow each other in the most disgraceful politics, though so tardy in borrowing any useful art or practice,

Those late treaties of this Emperor with the other Christian powers were so unpopular here, that it required a great deal of money, and all the arts of a most artful and despotic prince, to make them go down with the people.

I believe we might, with more safety than any other nation, assist him to improve his force and his country, if that were practicable,

ticable. They would not probably venture to attack us, and would then be better customers than they can ever be while they remain poor, indolent, and uncivilized. But there are likewise times when they should be checked: the remembrance of the last war we had with them lasted a long time, and indeed is not yet quite worn out of their memory: it has long helped to keep them in order, and to maintain among them a certain respect and dread of the English navy.

These Moors, though confined in their knowledge, have often great natural sagacity and penetration, and know a character at sight, full as well as any of us. Aware of Barbarian cunning, we must be constantly on our guard, and be ready to give up, in a moment, the most favourite and long-laboured plans or objects of negotiation, disconcerted by their penetration, their artifice, or barbarity.

As to their commerce, you may there know it nearly enough. You will see it can  
be



be of no great importance to us, or to any other nation, except to your garrison. They have had of late as far as thirty ships annually, mostly English, loaded at their western ports. That trade might indeed soon be doubled, and trebled, by a better kind of government, and more of your assistance.

I have had two more conversations with the Prince, and had the good fortune to fix his attention longer than I ever saw it fixed before, except to foot-ball, or shooting at a mark. Some of his questions were curious for their sagacity, and others for their simplicity and ignorance. He believes they are to set about conquering Christendom after they have settled certain domestic affairs; and he has no doubt of succeeding, when they can bring all their force to act. I find that, notwithstanding their close friendship with *Carlos*, they mean soon to attack some of his fortresses.

## L E T T E R    XIX.

*Of the Emperor, his Character, Government, Policy, and their Effects.—Of the Moors, and of national Characters.—Of Justice, Government, and State of Society.*

**T**HIS Emperor understands the Moors perfectly; but his genius or character is not well calculated to make the most of theirs. His mode of government, his perpetual rapacity, is more disgusting to them, and perhaps more hurtful to population, and to the necessary improvements, than all the cruelty of his predecessors. But that is exactly what he means: to impoverish and depopulate the country is his object. Despotism cannot bear the prosperity of its subjects, and seems to wish they all had but one neck, to be cut off at one blow.

A cruel and unfeeling disposition, in both master and slave, is perhaps the natural produce of this species of government. A  
much

much less degree of uncertainty in the possession of property, or of the fruits of their labour, would be sufficient to damp or repel all the activity and industry of men. The subordinate members must follow the head; and all must be rapacious and perfidious. Such, to many people, seems to be the character of the Moors, given them by nature; but it is only the produce of their government. I believe they did not merit this character during their best times in Spain.

This Emperor being more humane than most of his predecessors, and of a different character, perhaps deserves to be considered with more attention. But he means not, as many imagine, to encourage arts and industry, nor military merit, nor any other merit. It is only his avarice that makes him agree to these unconstitutional truces with the Christian powers, which, by opening the ports for the sake of duties, has given an appearance of some commerce, but which the same avarice will again soon check or destroy by oppression. He is even  
afraid

afraid of any degree of merit or popularity in any of his subjects; and when he professes to esteem and encourage it, he means only to deceive. He is cunning and artful, probably both from natural character and from long habit; perhaps originally from necessity. The degree of that necessity we cannot easily judge of.

His plan of government, if a set of wretched shifts and rapacious oppression deserve the name of plan, is generally simple, and has but one object in view; but *that* he endeavours to conceal, and to render his proceedings complex and crooked, without any apparent necessity, avoiding all appearance of rule or method, perplexed and mystical without a cause, as if to keep up the habit, or merely for the malicious pleasure of deceiving.

Though destruction is always the object, or the means employed by this kind of government, this man's method of accomplishing it is different from those formerly in use. The plan or object which he has  
always

always in view, is no other than to draw the greatest part of the money of his dominions into his own possession, which at once satiates his passion, and impoverishes and weakens the people, that he may govern them the easier. And he succeeds in it to an amazing degree, considering the Moorish arts and avarice he has to deal with.

But after all these precautions, and the consequences of extreme internal weakness and poverty, we find that such countries are not therefore much less subject to violent and destructive revolutions. It is the vigilance of the monarch, more than the debility of the people, which saves them from those tumultuous rebellions, and pretenders to the throne, to which they have been formerly so much accustomed. Their history is full of perpetual tumults, massacres, and civil wars. There has hardly been a peaceable succession before this, nor so long a peace as during this reign, which is certainly much to the credit of his present Majesty, and ought to place his name very  
high



high in their annals—if they had any body to write them.

Defolation and misery, however, seem everywhere to increase, in spite of all their peace and commerce. Whole suburbs and villages are gradually falling to ruins. Large tracts of country, formerly occupied and cultivated by M. Ishmael's black colonies, lie now in barren waste. And it appears, that the country flourished more under that piratical and merciless tyrant, than it does under the humane and commercial, but avaricious, Cidi Mahomet.

The people are probably right in wishing for war, as it makes them of some consequence to their master; and such people may certainly gain more by piracy than they do now by commerce or industry. Nay, they are probably incapable of either, beyond a certain degree of what is barely necessary to existence. If a country could possibly improve under such a government, we should have seen here some signs of it before

before this, during this peaceable reign, now above a dozen years. This monarch has never, since his accession, had any thing to fear; yet he is said, by those who know him best, to pass his time in constant fear and anxiety. The nature or turn of his policy and mode of government proceeds from his character; and that you have seen formed in his youth, as usual, by various circumstances. Long driven about the kingdom with his father, by competitors and rebellion; exposed to continual dangers, treachery, and alarms, he seems to have acquired an habitual horror of all these, and fancies that his safety must consist in the misery and weakness of his people. He endeavours to reconcile them to these unpopular measures of peace, by shewing them the guns, mortars, and batteries, which he gains from those Christians, (poor fools!) and by which they themselves are all to be conquered some day or other.

But every ship of war that appears on his coast he sees fraught with double danger. In the destruction of any of these batteries,

he fears the mask would be removed, the people undeceived ; and hence rebellion, dethroning, &c. and more especially if the ships be English, whom he hates as he dreads. He is observed to be very uneasy, and does not probably sleep well, during all the time any of our ships are on his coast.

The Moors, it is true, are quick, fiery, and impatient, treacherous and cruel, and require now to be governed with a rod of iron, which must be kept constantly in their sight. When once they begin to rise, and can find a leader, as in most despotic countries, they presently go to all the extremes of desperate cruelty and desolation. Some very trifling matter is sufficient, at times, to set them all up in armed confusion. This was indeed nearly the case lately, from a short illness of his majesty : they already began to fancy he was dead, and his death concealed ; and he, on hearing that gunpowder had suddenly risen to double its usual price, thought it necessary to shew himself, though still very ill.

A great

A great part of the peculiar character of each people may proceed from climate and particular physical causes, though it is difficult to estimate how much ; and we shall all continue to have different systems and opinions concerning those things. We know, however, that laws, institutions, manners, and customs, will in time prevail over those dispositions which we suppose given by nature ; and that the character of a nation, at distant periods, may be very different.

We likewise find a great resemblance among very distant nations, while in the rude or early stages of society. But arts, civilization, and modes of government, lead them often as it were in opposite directions, and presently create striking differences between them. The Greeks, Phœnicians, Carthaginians, and Arabs, have all been great nations, though of very different characters, and yet were all probably formed from nearly the same kind of original materials, from people very like these Moors. However, these African nations seem gene-

rally to have preserved a certain sameness of character in many points, through all periods of their history. They seem always to have consisted of the same kind of quick and volatile, but weak and combustible, materials. As troops, we shall find them still the same kind of fiery, irregular, desultory light-horse, as the Numidians and Mauritians probably were in the time of the Romans, if we make allowance for the colouring and dignity of the Roman historians. They might, even now, soon be made capable of powerful sudden attacks, but not of any great and continued efforts. They could never probably be made to support any system of conduct long with sufficient patience and firmness. Opposed to a steady disciplined army, their barbarian impatience would soon appear, and give to a vigilant enemy decisive advantages. Naturally sagacious, quick, and intelligent, they might soon be taught, to a certain degree, how to make use of their natural advantages; but all would as soon be neglected and forgotten again, if not kept up by constant discipline, of which the Mahometans



metans in general are probably incapable; —thoughtless and improvident, yet rapacious and avaricious: the inconsistencies of human nature are every where numerous; in this state of society they are more remarkable, and different from those of civilization. Though frightened into reason to-day, to-morrow they forget their danger, and carelessly return to their former habits, though assured they will fail of success. Here are no permanent ranks of people or of families, nor difference of manners; all are equally good company. Despotism brings all to a level, and that level is near the meanest of the species. A government, where all the vices of human nature are the natural produce, must create a resemblance of character throughout the individuals, and between all such countries, however distant.

My guide, and protector on this journey, one of the emperor's friends, is now employed in pressing horses for us, and in letting them free again, for payment. His toil and industry have been amazing in this

way, letting no opportunity escape him of making a blankil =  $2\frac{1}{2}d$ . The Moorish avarice is far beyond ours, and we should think they might therefore be made industrious, though now of so opposite a character. After he has made what he can in this way, then I must pay the hire at a very dear rate, which is also mostly his profit; and there is no remedy but patience. Justice is so far from being ready and easy here, that people chuse to submit to the most violent outrages rather than apply for it; and now it is only to be had at the capital, from his majesty, and very uncertain even there. It should not surprise us to find the people so bad; it is rather astonishing they are not worse. There is less robbing on the roads during this reign than formerly, as this monarch will admit of no robbers besides himself, unless he is well paid for the licence, which is yet done sometimes in particular cases, though not so much as usual. On this principle the bashaw may pillage what he pleases, provided he carries it all to his master, for sharing it with him is  
not

not sufficient. Indeed that respectable magistrate generally takes care to purloin a little for himself, though he knows it will be taken from him with severe punishment. In short, it is here where the strong may oppress the weak—the Moor may beat and rob the poor Jew, who dares not complain for many reasons. All spoils become lawful when a sufficient share goes to his majesty.

Were it possible for even a tenth part of the justice necessary in a great kingdom to proceed from the throne, a rapacious rabble of the friends and attendants of royalty surround and intercept it. In such a state there must always be more than sufficient examples of impunity and injustice, to encourage many attempts to do evil.

In the rude state, while property is yet insecure or undivided, certain crimes and vices, as theft or robbery, are not considered in the same degree of turpitude as among a settled and civilized people. Declining nations are probably worse, weaker, and more vicious, than those that are rising, though near the same state of ignorance. In the

rising state, they may help one another up ; in the other, they pull each other down : so where there is the most necessity for private virtues, for mutual assistance, there is the least to be found. Friendship and fidelity are sometimes the produce of oppression, which presses men as it were closer together for mutual assistance or defence ; but when that is once given up and despaired of, society is in a manner dissolved ; every virtue, humanity itself, is destroyed ; distrust or malevolence breaks all the usual bonds of union : accordingly we find here hardly any moral sense of right and wrong. We find they all consider each other as perfectly perfidious.—All wish to oppress and rob in their turn. They consider their being detected only as a misfortune.

You may well be surprised how society, in such a state, can exist for any time, if it can be said to exist as a society ; it may be considered rather as a state of warfare. All tends here to produce a dismal kind of uncertainty which hangs over life, and stifles in embryo almost every voluntary exertion, and which brings all to a certain degree of mean-



meanness, of debility, dejection, or vice—to a state with which we are unacquainted, and which is therefore worth our considering; but that degree is, I think, seldom so great as might be expected: no principles or moral causes ever go so far in practice, nor have all the influence which they seem, in speculation, calculated to produce. Some distant hope of change, or of escaping unnoticed in the crowd, even the thoughtless and inconsiderate nature of men, all help to carry them on, and induce them to hoard up even what they know will be taken from them—to take wives and establish families; and to try, as they are hurried on through life, like the flocks on their journey, to snatch a mouthful of ease or enjoyment as they pass. Happily, many things tend to keep men nearer to an equality in happiness than appearances indicate.

In some of the mountainous parts of this country, where this government does not reach, the people seem better, more industrious, steady, and provident, in their poor little way of life. They have fixed  
habit-



habitations, little cottages and gardens, and in tolerable order ; so that there must be some honesty, good faith, and mutual assistance among them ; and hence it is plain, that such a government as this is worse than none.

A violent and tyrannic government is generally a weak one. It never has in fact half the power it pretends to exercise.—Moving by fits and starts, in no settled walk or system ; by turns all violence, or all lethargy ; the parts of the confused machine are not fitted nor ready to obey, so that all its efforts shew either a waste or a want of power, and its greatest exertions tend only to destruction. The despot can destroy, but can seldom be obeyed, as he desires. On seeing this emperor's orders often disputed at his very gates, it gives an Englishman pleasure to recollect that our laws are better obeyed and executed in our remotest dominions, than those of the tyrant in his own capital.

## L E T T E R XX.

*Of some Customs, Arts, Audiences.—Muley Idris.—Religion.—Colonies.—Blacks.—Sea Ports.—Money and Measures.—Conclusion.*

YOU know I dread being tedious, and do not wish to deal much in particulars, though I may sometimes be insensibly led into both. I am frequently in doubt if the life and manners of such a people as this deserve much of our time and attention, though full of great lessons for governments and princes. Many things might, doubtless, be found to satisfy the historical curiosity of the antiquarian, but I am looking only for things of utility, or what I may fancy to be such. We might discover here arts, customs, superstitions, which might be traced to Asia, and to the remotest antiquity: so we may, in various  
parts

parts of Europe. Such may be the custom of presents, their funerals, and respect for the dead, their tools, ornaments, drefs, recreations, ceremonies, domestic employments. Though the arts and manners of periods which we have passed and left behind may be more the objects of curiosity than of utility ; yet in the lowest condition of human nature, we may stumble upon something unexpectedly useful, and every state may furnish matter for instructive reflection. We were wishing the other day that our English cooks were to learn here some of their œconomical and savoury methods of dressing some viands and vegetables, in the steam of the pot ; and that our country carpenters and other tradesmen might learn some of their simple ways of working, and of executing great works with so few tools and so little assistance. The most polished nations may find something to learn from the most savage. In the mountains, and in the country, men make their own shoes, furniture, and utensils, which in the towns is the work of separate professions. Many seem to pass their time  
chiefly

chiefly between sitting, smoking, and sleeping, all of which they prolong much beyond what is usual in Europe. How so many can be maintained in idleness, and by what labour, of which so little is to be seen in the country, can only be accounted for from their wants being few.

Sometimes they take fits of riding, which they perform in the other extreme of rude exertion, using the poor horse with a roughness and violence fitter for a wild beast that they wished to tame, with a bridle and spurs of a tremendous and cruel construction, which presently make his mouth and sides run with blood. These riding-fits which they sometimes take, seemingly *a-propos* to nothing, they consider as a kind of war-exercise: the moment any of these fellows gets upon a horse, he thinks of fighting, and begins to go through the motions of it, brandishing and attacking in their way, so that you would think him half mad. Individually they may be considered as tolerably good light-horse, or rather as materials *pour en faire*, if they could  
be

be brought to any regularity and uniformity in their movements, in some of which they are singly very dexterous : their methods of attack, with their crooked swords, the variety and frequency of their charges, might be made to have great effect, especially on troops unaccustomed to them. I believe General Seidlitz borrowed many of his excellent ideas of cavalry from Turks and Tartars, such troops as these. They have no idea of any regular drill or exercise. They sometimes fire and throw darts at a mark—generally at an earthen pot or a blown bladder, very near, under fifty yards. But their boar-hunt is a fine manly diversion. Their foot-ball, or *pallone*, as in Italy, is good exercise. Some jugglers and story-tellers, who exhibit sometimes to the crowd on a market-day, form the sum of their public diversions.

The best part of this government is the continuance of the old and warlike practice of the prince or chief appearing frequently among his people on horseback : it is now become a regular audience or levee two or



three times a week ; a thing so unexpected in such a country. This custom serves to check so many abuses, and to keep so many people in awe, that I suppose this kind of government could not go on without it. Under a really great and wise prince it might be made the means of doing much good ; arts, industry, public virtue, might thereby perhaps be considerably promoted, all in their own simple and direct manner. If it were possible for uncontrolled power to be steady, uniform, or consistent, in its proceedings ; if these general orders of the emperor, issued verbally at levees, proceeded from a wise and connected plan, and were firmly carried into execution ; they might in time have almost the force of laws, and might extend much farther throughout the country, possessing the great advantages of military orders, in promptitude and obedience ; but, alas ! no human individual, and still less a succession of them, can probably ever be found equal to such a situation as his. To do any good seems to require all the wisdom of the most enlightened

lightened nation.—How little can be done by an ignorant despot is easy to imagine.

We do not hear of any one who is fit to succeed Muley Idris (the present emperor's uncle, who is dying), or who can equal him in address, artifice, extortion, or in the management of the public business here; so that the emperor must now have upon his own shoulders the whole business of the nation, which will not therefore be better nor more expeditiously done: he cannot delegate power sufficient for any business; he has confidence in no man; his trusting this uncle so much, seemed partly from early habits. His physician, your poor Portuguese doctor, Don Juan, we hear will be in danger if this prince dies; it seems it is not uncommon here to put a doctor to death for letting his patient die—if a prince or a great man.

Their money weights and measures you there know with their commerce. The ideas of the wisest here on those subjects  
you

you may be sure are barbarously ignorant; their history a perpetual variation; sometimes attempting to borrow European ideas, but without even knowledge sufficient to understand or adopt them: indeed to establish any thing lasting in these matters requires all the wisdom and stability of the best government. But few or none of their customs can be of much importance to us, where none have a tendency or lead to virtue, which indeed would not only be useless but obnoxious here, and for which we cannot find there is any term in their language.

The respect they pay to the memory of their saints might be well, were it for any thing but folly, or rather an artful imbecility, by which those people enjoy a kind of liberty of doing what they please, and seem to have great influence: their folly, which is generally I believe affected, is considered as a kind of inspiration; it runs in families—but you know the particulars. Were I writing to one at a distance, and less acquainted with this country, I might

be more circumstantial, but you are neither distant nor ignorant enough to merit a particular account of any thing here.

You see something like religion; and priests seem fortunately always to obtain some influence over men through all the stages of society, and more especially in its earlier periods, for which indeed it seems more peculiarly adapted, as a necessary supplement to the defects of law and order; and it must continue to be always a good appendix to the code whenever it can be kept within bounds, or reformed and curtailed of superfluous power when necessary. As the code of laws and modes of education become more perfect, the necessity for a superstitious and all-governing religion probably diminishes; and the authority of its professors should be carefully regulated and restrained within bounds while it is practicable, and before they gain a head of power not afterwards to be controlled. You know some other nations have not been so fortunate as ours in this respect. Here their religion seems to have yet too much

6
influence

influence on their manners, opinions, and conduct ; it makes them hate all the rest of mankind, and occupies too much of their time.

Religious sanctuaries here sometimes stop the hand of bloody and rapacious tyranny, and tend to lessen the effects of private revenge, as it is usual for people to take refuge there against their enemies, who are generally obliged to respect them, and sometimes against the sovereign himself, though he does not always respect them. The effects of them might be of some benefit, if they could be made to protect the innocent and not the guilty, as is pretended ; but we know cases to the contrary, and it is notorious that the guilty have been there protected as in Spain, and that the innocent have been given up to the superior power of the despot, whenever his interest or his passions required it.

If one of these saints, by some fortunate chain of circumstances, were to turn out to be a man of genius and information, he



might do what he pleased with such a people ; he might improve, reform, and new-model, the whole nation and its government. The improbability of such a one ever being produced here banishes the idea of speculating upon it. But as we become interested in our own speculations, we cannot help looking forward with a degree of pleasure, and hope to some future period of conquest or colonization of this country again from Europe ; and yet upon reflection we may fear it is still far distant. We have not yet, I fear, got near enough to the termination of the long period of superstition and fanaticism, and we must probably wait for that of reason before such events can be produced. Though the Mahomedan conquests and establishment are not perhaps so firm and intimate here as generally imagined, and might be rather easily overturned by certain operations from the north, assisted by colonies from the south ; but mankind, during this yet fanatical \*

\* Whatever we may think of ourselves and the north of Europe, Mahomedism and the south of Europe certainly still deserve the epithet of *fanatical*.

age, are nowhere sufficiently qualified and prepared to mix well and intermarry with the natives, nor the natives with them, not even in the countries where they emigrate most to each other, though such mixture is perhaps the only way to secure any conquest or establishment, and to improve the human race. The difficulties generally proceed from their differing in religious opinions. Were it not for the barbarous inveteracy of Mahomedism, we might hope in time to see it wear down by the arts of peace, and give way to the weight of its own absurdities. Its future history cannot yet well be foreseen; it seems doubtful if it can ever again become sufficiently rational and tolerant to admit of the necessary improvements in arts and government; or if it must go in ignorance and barbarity, and at last decline by its own corruption and inconsistencies, till supplanted by some new system of fanaticism. There is no giving Mahomedans any ideas of liberty or good government as yet, for they have no notion of sovereignty without despotic power.

To secure and to civilize this country, I believe it must be done by military colonies similar to those of the Romans: I wish you could search and find out all the internal police, manners, and management, of those. Let us suppose such colonization to happen in our time, or that we are going to set about it: such suppositions will quicken your diligence. The man who does not frequently build castles, plant colonies, and gain battles, in idea, will not probably ever do any thing of the kind in reality. If I were to have any hand in their formation, I should probably insist upon some which may appear to you singularities—I should imitate Penn, and have no state religion, but secure a complete toleration and protection to all sects—I should have more women, and give them more to say and to do in such colonies than may correspond with your ideas of military or even of civil life—I should be for the sexes living and acting almost perpetually together, both in public and private, as the first requisite towards civilization, especially in this country; they should neither eat, drink, dress,

dress, nor do almost any thing without the presence and assistance of each other. I think, even with us, the sexes retiring so much from one another seldom proceeds from any good motive, and has no good effects; here, their separation is the great impediment to all the advances of the species, and one of the many pernicious consequences of the subordination of one sex to the other.

The importance of this great continent or peninsula of Africa is obvious, and its being as yet so little known or improved is equally surprising; however, many parts of it are known to be capable of every kind of produce, and may yet again supply Europe, &c. with many things better than now by distant colonies.

The native and natural race of man throughout this great continent is probably the *black*, of two kinds, the woolly-headed on one side of the peninsula, and the long-haired on the other, except those of Atlas and the northern coast, where they were

probably always white in some degree ; but these have been so frequently mixed and colonized from Europe and Asia, that it is now become impossible to distinguish the indigenous and the different exotics ; however, in and about Atlas are the countries I should like most to explore, if it were possible ; and I suspect it is not so impracticable, nor the inhabitants so wild and barbarous, as generally reported and imagined. We might there discover many objects of curiosity and of utility—in those of nature and of antiquity—in Roman and Carthaginian remains—in the different languages and races of people—perhaps the Punic language. When this country was better peopled and more productive, the communication between the northern and southern coasts, and with some of the internal parts, was probably much greater than we yet know or can trace. Carthage possibly drew much of her wealth and greatness from that source. In Tunis, and the country around it, they say a spirit of commerce and industry is still perceptible.

We



We do not here perceive any reality in the supposed inferiority of the black race to the white, but often the contrary; some of the best officers, farmers, workmen, of this empire, and I believe of several others, have been of that race. All the different colours seem to be nearly of the same African character, comprehending a variety of tempers and turns of mind as among ourselves; there may be some shades of difference, physical, and hence moral, sometimes perceptible in the humour and temper of mind between the blacks and whites; the black may have rather more of that kind of volatile sensibility, or irritability, which seems to attend the human character as it approaches the sun—warmer, yet weaker: their sentiments, though more ardent, seem to be more transient than ours; and their faculties, as well as formation, may be somewhat different, but not, I think, beyond the power of habit and education to model and assimilate. They may have the advantage in some faculties, and the whites in others, and I doubt not but great characters and a great nation might be formed of these, as well

well as of other human beings; but the world wants yet more knowledge and experience on this subject, and we should require much more residence and more attention to determine any thing in it: this is certainly one of the best countries for that purpose; here all the various races and colours of men are nearly on the same footing of estimation, unless they happen to be Jews or Christians, and they may be considered and compared in all the different stations that this state of society affords, from the bashaw or general down to the menial slave: in our islands and colonies we see the blacks only in the state of slavery, which produces always a distinct and similar character.

The sea-ports are the most essential parts of a country: they might have three or four tolerably good here, by a little assistance given to nature, at Santa Cruz, Mogodore, Woladia; and perhaps Tangier might still be made a pretty good one, by clearing it, and rebuilding the mole, which might be carried much farther out. If the  
Christian

Christian powers had continued to increase and improve their garrisons and ports on this coast; they might by this time have served as places of trade and friendly intercourse in times of peace, or of asylum, or as military schools, in case of war: the people around would have liked them for the same reasons that the people of all the southern coasts of Spain and Portugal like to have the English at Gibraltar.

But this government can never probably be sufficiently settled to undertake or finish any public works that require much time; hardly any of these emperors have of late been able to finish even a house to live in. This one mounted the throne with the rare advantage of having no competitor, being an only son; an advantage which his successor, whoever he may be, will not likely enjoy: his more savage sons may probably vie with each other for the succession, as usual, and again drench the country in blood, and in all the horrors of a civil war.

Such

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Such are some of the observations and ideas that have occurred of the condition of mankind, on examining and comparing the people of these and other regions—of their arts, ignorance, opinions, manners, characters, prejudices. If some of them lead to conclusions different from received opinions, it is not my fault; I do not purposely set up for being singular. If you find any thing to correct or oppose, pray do it—through the variety of contested opinions lies the road to truth. Among other considerations that these may suggest to you, I think there may be perceived, in travelling south from Dover to Morocco, a curious line of the gradual progression of despotism—a species of government, of which it is to be feared some princes are apt to form too high an opinion; it may be well to shew them its constant and ever pernicious effects. Such might be, among the great and beneficial objects of travel,

worthy

worthy of your young princes when of a certain age, and I must confess an ardent ambition to be of the party, because I think I might be useful. As you intend, in case of that event, to get out of the circle of European manners and ideas, in order to take a more enlarged view of nature, of men, and things; in the Mediterranean part of your tour, you might here, and at other places, give them a cursory view of this species of government, which is full of instructive lessons to all, but more especially to princes. A nearer inspection might serve to increase their abhorrence of it. The temperate and virtuous Spartans could read of drunkenness, as we do of despotism, but they chose to shew it to their children.





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L E T T E R I.

*Of first Impressions and Objects of Travel.—  
Men and Things.—Governments.—Truths  
of Importance.—Reading insufficient.—Of  
the French.*

To Mr. C——.

St. Omer, 1777.

**W**E are always ready enough to believe our own discoveries of importance, and are easily persuaded that the result of our labours and experience may be

be of service, at least to our friends. You are probably right in conceiving that I require some encouragement. Your flattering request and remarks tend to raise these of mine into some new consequence in my own eyes, and may induce me to take more pains in future, and endeavour to retain for you some more of those first impressions as a traveller, which, I agree with you, are not always the worst, nor the least worth preserving.

Of the different countries I visit, I have neither time nor intention to trouble you with much of the present fashionable style of *minutiæ* in natural history or antiquities, nor to give you an itinerary catalogue of all the sights to be seen. Without some object or principle in view, the daily accumulation of little facts and particulars tends only to increase the perplexity and confusion, or to enlarge the hoards preparing for future and uncertain theories, which may yet long continue to succeed each other, and to perplex mankind before they arrive at the *truths of importance*. I like best the theory or system  
which

which is formed on the spot, with the knowledge of the facts; those framed in our closets are generally wrong. Of the two classes of objects in this world, men and things, I think the latter occupies too much the attention of travellers, to the neglect of the former, which is certainly the most important.

We have only to look round us in a few different countries to see that on government and legislation depends the greatest part of the happiness of mankind; and yet these important objects seem now the least attended to by our modern travellers; nay, they are in some danger of being entirely excluded, under the now disgraceful name of politics, from our catalogue of subjects of enquiry. The sages of antiquity—an Herodotus, a Pythagoras, a Lycurgus—thought otherwise; to observe the laws, constitutions, and manners, of other countries, in order to improve their own, were then thought to be motives of travel worthy of the wisest and greatest men.

In short, I am habitually inclined to consider man as always the first object of attention, and other things in some proportion to their connection with him ; not that I intend to attempt any thing like a complete account of any nation or people : A few short sketches and reflections on the men or things, as they may chance to strike me where I travel or reside, I mean to continue ; and with as much caution as practicable against natural or habitual prejudices, I mean to attempt at once to give you such truths as may seem to me of importance enough for your notice and mine—life being too short to form voluminous collections of little facts, and wait for the conclusions of philosophers thereon. If I can sometimes succeed in pointing out the right road or proper object to be pursued in travelling, I shall not think my labour lost.

We need not fear that the subjects for observation are yet nearly exhausted : you future travellers may comfort yourselves that much real information is yet to be gathered even in the most beaten paths of  
your



your predecessors, and you may know that nations have hardly begun to learn wisdom of each other, and that none of them are yet sufficiently acquainted, mixed, and connected, to be much benefited by their respective improvements; but as they mix and become more intimately united, the better it will be for the whole; so that we are every way encouraged and invited by nature to travel and mingle with each other, and this is much better than reading about one another in books, from which I wish you to beware of expecting too much; they may direct you to useful and real knowledge, but can seldom supply its place; on them may be built a large and necessary part of the structure of education, but not the whole, as some of our learned I fear are too apt to imagine: to know, we must see at least: in many things reading will give but imperfect ideas, and particularly in objects of sight.

Of the French nation I shall give you only a few remarks *en passant*. Stationed in the centre of the civilized world, their

O 2 character,

character, history, and their influence, are too generally known and felt to require much more illustration—they are as yet better known to you than you to them. Small as the distance is that separates the two nations, in the first boat you may observe upon their coast, may be seen the great difference between the two races of people, and that difference appears, especially at first, to be much in favour of our countrymen. The English sailors who navigate our vessels are strong, silent, laborious, methodical; those on board the French vessels and boats are a poor, weak, and ragged race, wrangling and bustling, rather than working, with great noise but little skill, the effects not corresponding to their apparent exertions. On examining the workmanship and materials of every thing about them—of their vessels, utensils, clothing—we may already draw conclusions of the inferior state of the useful arts and industry of France. Nor do we find reason to change our opinion on going a-shore—whether we inspect the town or country, the shops, houses, offices, the fields, fences, carriages,

carriages, cattle, or their different tradesmen at work, the English superiority is every where manifest in all kinds of workmanship, and more particularly where strength is required either in the work or workmen.

Generally bad mechanics, they can seldom make any thing strong without making it clumsy, nor contrive any machine to answer different purposes without making it too complicated. And it seems as if all the bad materials of Europe came to the French market, as iron, timber, leather, tools, and various matters for different trades and manufactures. Indeed the London market, I believe, engrosses the best of the produce in many things throughout the commercial world. You may see in our friend B.'s books the difference he makes in the price of insurance between a French and an English ship.

I see neither truth nor wisdom in preaching the doctrine that one sometimes hears

maintained of late, by some young men, that their seamen are every way equal to ours.

In some cases we may still think our prejudice not ill founded, of one Englishman being equal to two Frenchmen. I already know several trades, in which the work commonly done is at least in that proportion. I think they are evidently a more feeble race, and do not probably exert the strength they have, equal to our workmen. But they have far more vivacity, cheerfulness, and good humour—a restless activity, and may seldomer be inclined to idleness than English workmen, though their labour is less productive. They seem not so much engrossed by their work as in haste to have done. They generally employ more hands than we do to the same kind of work. You know the example of three men to fix a horse-shoe, which with us is done by one.

With these prepossessions, so readily suggested by first appearances, and perhaps a  
little

little out of humour with some unexpected troubles and difficulties in getting what we want, which is not uncommon here, we may require some time to become sufficiently cool and impartial to perceive what is really good or worthy of imitation. You may not, for example, at first attend to their excellent police—to their spacious and superior manner of building, though badly finished—to their polite and agreeable manner—to their easy and simple ways of contriving in some of the conveniencies and common modes of life—and to the habits of œconomy which our children may learn. The small expence and trouble attending their dress, societies, balls, theatres, we find very comfortable and pleasant.

I think we can already perceive that, notwithstanding their poverty and weakness, they may be a happier people than we. They fortunately think they have every thing *comme il faut*, while we, sullenly wise and profound, are discontented with much of our own, and with still more of theirs.



We pretend to find among them many things detestable, much below, and very little above, mediocrity, except their own conceit of themselves, which, perhaps happily for them, passes all ordinary bounds.

The distinguishable races of people, as if yet unmixed, to be met with in neighbouring countries, forms a curious subject of speculation. Each name, clan, district, or family, especially if distant from any capital or commercial intercourse, preserves a physical and moral character, distinct and visible. To investigate the causes of these characteristic distinctions might be curious, and perhaps useful. If we could with certainty decide on what it may depend, different races of human beings might be bred for different purposes. Some whole races seem born for the sword, and others for the pen, commerce, politics. If we could take as much pains with the human race as we frequently do with that of our horses, we might probably succeed as well.—We might have military colonies of mountaineers, and  
a par-

a particular breed of men for each profession of importance.

As to bodily strength, I think the English make or figure is generally more favourable to it than that of the French. The greater length of back or of the body in the latter, I consider as a cause of weakness. I know not if our friend J. Hunter, or any anatomist, has made comparative dissections of different nations, or if the French have a vertebra more in the back than their neighbours. This may appear jocular, but we know the reality and the effects of this deficiency of strength, in their troops, on various occasions, as during a long march or campaign. Perhaps that difference of bodily figure and proportions may be ascribed to their method of swathing their children, together with poorness of food. Not only the quantity, but likewise the nutritive quality, of both animal and vegetable food are I believe generally inferior, in a state of poor cultivation; and it does not then produce that strength and  
vigour

vigour of body or mind necessary to exertion. Poverty, or want of capital, likewise prevents their attempting improvements in agriculture. So that weakness and inability, like many other evils, tend in various ways to perpetuate themselves.

## L E T T E R II.

*Of Prepossessions.—French Regulations.—  
 Their Industry, Character, Separations.—  
 Size and Forms of Government.—Uni-  
 formity.—Tyranny.*

St. Omers.

**N**Otwithstanding what our very facetious travellers may write, I do not find that many of us get so very soon into good-humour with every thing we find, good or bad, or so very readily leave all our old habits and prejudices at home. We have been to Paris, Bourdeaux, &c. by one road, and returned hither by another. As the countries we have passed through are pretty well known, I shall only trouble you with a few general observations.

As we advance into France, we find ourselves interrupted and teased with multitudes of new orders and regulations; each town, each class, each province, and in  
 short

short every species of public business, we can presently perceive to be overloaded with regulations, and with people to see them executed. There is not only over-regulation, but perpetual differences in the manner. Every day's journey produces some new variation. What is right here, is wrong a few leagues hence; and we may be searched and subjected to fresh disputes and difficulties almost every day we travel. But these, and such peculiarities, you probably know from other travellers, and can dispense with my being more particular.

There seems to be in human nature a strong propensity to legislate, and to multiply laws even in those situations where none of real consequence or utility can be made or executed. Does the French government mean by this false display of ineffectual law and regularity to deceive or to torment us and their own subjects? Is it to magnify their public wisdom and policy? It strikes us that many of these very regulations tend to impede the business they are professedly established to promote.

With



With such shackles on internal communication, how can they ever become a commercial people? and commerce appears now to be the universal object of national ambition. And how they got to their present degree of industry (which is above mediocrity), is not easily explained. Their singular character will hardly account for it all. To be sure, that happy but unfeeling flow of spirits which makes them easy under every species of adversity, even under slavery itself, and which we are often at a loss whether to admire or despise, carries them farther on, and produces more exertion under the worst kind of government than any other people we know. They can exert themselves after repeated disappointments to a very considerable degree, without any fresh encouragement or security. They seem easily and willingly deceived by a shew of law, of forms, and tribunals, into a hope of security; and this actually produces many of the effects of reality, whenever their government is wise enough to conceal for any time the claw of

its

its power—not that I think now quite so highly of their industry as I did at a distance. In that, as in several other things, they have contrived to get a greater reputation than they deserve. By increasing the difficulties to export their produce, and to communicate mutual assistance between the provinces, their government has set bounds to their natural activity. For those things which cannot be carried to market will either cease to be made, or only that quantity will be produced which is sufficient for a small consumption at home, and near it.

This tormenting separation of provinces, and difference of laws within the same kingdom, seems to be established or continued on purpose to divide and govern, and perhaps to impoverish, in the true spirit of despotism, which is too apt to adopt such timid and insidious policy.

The French provinces were, you know, anciently so many independent states, now consolidated into one great monarchy; but  
that

that junction still remaining so incomplete leaves room for the above suspicions.

Most princes have now sufficient power, if they were willing and active enough, to introduce an uniformity of good laws throughout their dominions; and its not being done, indicates too plainly some sinister design or careless indifference.—Uncontrolled power is naturally subject to both.

The few attempts that have been made in France towards that uniformity I believe you will find, by their history, have wanted both sincerity and perseverance. Nor have they ever gone far enough in the laborious work of reformation to know the difficulties of it, for these are always great and numerous. Rome, even in the time of Cæsar, was, you know, incapable of liberty. Their ancient character, manners, and constitution, were together irrecoverably lost; and this I suspect may be the case with France since the loss of their constitution, and of all the habits and principles of their freedom.

On

On the proper division of the world into nations of a proper and governable size, probably depends much of the improvement of mankind. We have seen the too small and the too large equally incapable of duration and of advancement—the one unwieldy, and the other too weak. The Roman empire became too extensive, and had never probably, except at first, a form of government well suited to its extent. The numerous unequal pieces into which it was afterwards broken, were too small and unsubstantial to last long. The various attempts that have since been made to re-unite some of them, have seldom as yet succeeded in removing the ill effects of that division, which may yet produce much mischief before men can discover and get into the right size, as well as the right forms, of government. As to the form, I think they might learn more from England than from all the rest of the world, if nations could again get into the way of learning and borrowing laws and institutions from their neighbours, like the ancient Greeks. . Where any freedom of  
enquiry

enquiry exists, they may go on by degrees to learn ; and as the people open their eyes and see their chains, they may make various efforts for relief, but they are hardly any where, except *chez nous*, as yet sufficiently informed to know even their object, and still less the road to it.

The general ideas of law, justice, government, here, after all their fine writings upon it, are yet too slavish, confused, or inadequate ; and this will probably appear in their future attempts to reform. Were they even to have their *états généraux* restored, with their present inadequate ideas of representation and elections, heated with some wild impracticable American ideas of liberty, they would probably run into some pernicious extreme, or would perpetually disagree both in the system and the means. Ages of experimental enquiry, and of liberty gradually acquired, are probably necessary to know the right plan, and as much more to put it in execution.

Modern tyranny, though more gentle, is not perhaps much less oppressive than the  
 VOL. I. P ancient,



ancient, and probably more timid and indolent. Whatever may favour that indolence, and facilitate the ruling and draining their subjects, will be adopted by such a government, in preference to any thing that would make them rich and happy, lest they should become insolent when ill treated.

Happily for mankind, arbitrary power often defeats its own purposes; and in proportion as it deviates from honesty and simplicity, creates to itself trouble and disappointment. By experience it sometimes discovers that these animals, the people, must at least be fed as they work, and in proportion to the useful exertions to be expected from them; and hence often arise a number of overwise regulations for that purpose; but, though better than nothing, none of these provisional regulations are equal to the simple one, of letting them feed themselves from their own labour. For this end, protection and security are sufficient. The less government interferes in the detail of domestic œconomy of the subject, the better.

That

That of governing too much is perhaps one of the worst, and yet the most common, faults of modern policy ; and one of its worst effects, and which seems to be the least noticed, is, that in the progress towards slavery the people gradually lose their powers and exertions, and at length become so weak as to look up to government for almost every thing, and even perhaps at last like children to be fed.

Here government, or the king, is already supposed and expected to do every thing that concerns the public or any part of it. Such things as with us are done by townships or counties, by individuals or subscriptions, as roads, canals, sea-ports, piers, storing up provisions, regulating prices ; even stage-coaches, it seems, cannot be tolerably established but by his majesty becoming proprietor. In other countries trade supports the state ; in this the state must support trade : every trifling thing here requires the hand of government.

## L E T T E R III.

*Of Agriculture.—The People.—Their Decline, and Importance.*

EXCEPT in the wine countries, we meet with little else but corn-husbandry ; no proportional number of cattle nor a grass farm to be seen, though these are probably the life and soul of agriculture. In the proper number of animals to labour, to manure, and to feed upon the land, probably consists the main spring and force of agriculture, which improves with population ; and thence may proceed the greatest and best kind of national wealth, strength, and prosperity, and which by such means may yet be carried to an extent hitherto little known and less practised, except perhaps in some parts of China, of the low countries, and near some towns.

The few cattle they have throughout most parts of France are too generally but miserable

miserable carrion. The horses, the oxen, the sheep, all seem of a poor degenerate race, and all of the same kind—no variety nor cross breeds of them, as in England.

Animal life in general does not appear to be in a condition of much vigour or energy throughout this kingdom, till we begin to leave it and ascend the mountains by which it is bounded on either side—the Alps or Pyrenees ; or till we enter the rich plains of Flanders, where we find more size and strength, although becoming gross and heavy.

Their corn countries are mostly large, naked, melancholy plains, without trees, fences or divisions, and thinly inhabited by a poor, weak, and sickly race, too often in rags and wooden shoes : thus the labouring and most useful part of the nation is considered and treated with rigour and contempt. The term *peuple*, so far from conveying ideas of respect, greatness, benevolence,



lence, or importance, seems here a term of reproach. The phrase *majesty of the people*, borrowed from the ancients, and which you read in their authors, is nevertheless unfelt and unknown, except among a few secluded philosophers.

Is it not to be apprehended that the English people may likewise in time lose that respect and influence which they have been accustomed to assert, though sometimes with insolence, unless it be more assiduously supported by wise regulations? On their consequence being kept up, with all its inconveniences, probably depends most of your national superiority. That superior spirit of exertion, of industry, and enterprise, in which they go beyond any other people I know, probably proceeds from a certain noble opinion of themselves, and of their own importance. Perhaps nothing but the other two branches of the legislature being obliged to court the people, could so long have preserved their importance in the state.

But



But are there not certain degrees of corruption and debility, a gradual change of manners, and hence of government, which necessarily attend a high state of civilization, and which may sink them to a level with their neighbours, unless some means can be found to counteract them? Different degrees of arts and civilization may require different laws and regulations. The spirit of liberty must be proportionate to times and circumstances. The same species of freedom and licentiousness that might have been formerly necessary, and the few regulations and restraints that were found to be sufficient, may not be so now. And unless you arrange and regulate the people better, for both civil and military purposes, and thereby secure their importance in the state with proper subordination, they may, through anarchy, fall into the same kind of languid impotence and contempt with most of the people throughout the rest of the world; and the weight, the superiority of your nation will fall with them.

The mischievous anarchy of the democratic spirit might certainly be obviated by wise regulations, and without losing its beneficial effects.

One would sometimes be tempted to believe even our government capable, at times, of a certain sinister policy, of leaving the people in a state of confusion, that they may, by their excesses, bring themselves and their cause into disgrace; and that our different parties too often tacitly agree in that neglect, or secretly impede the necessary remedies. Is this merely for the chances furnished to the fishing in troubled waters? A miserable desperate game! However, you stand a noble instance to shew, with how little force and coercion a people may be governed. Yet your wisest sovereigns have probably made the most arrangements, and had always those essential points of *defence* and *police* at once in view; but they did not, as here, so heavily over-burden the people with superfluous and oppressive regulations. Such were your Alfreds and Elizabeths;  
and

and it is probably still to the prince you are to look up, for the only effectual political remedies to the evils that threaten you. You can never expect your people nor your parliaments to reform themselves. You should try by education to form a *Lycurgus* (if it be possible for these modern and civilized times to produce such a prince); I see no other remedy for you, if you are in danger. But, for all your loud complaints and apparent confusion, it may be doubted if any great reform be yet necessary in your government or constitution, though neither are perfect. The evils are not yet probably come to that height as to risk the possible evils of any considerable change; and perhaps no great reform is practicable, without some violent shock or necessity, some public danger or distress.

Be not so afraid of the exertions and interruptions of war. If it can be managed with tolerable prudence and œconomy, it may produce more reform than a long peace, which is too often but a gradual

dual decay. War may force you to regulate yourselves for defence; by which certain points of internal police may be obtained, which might otherwise long remain neglected.

## L E T T E R IV.

*Of Government.—French Impediment to Improvement.—Their Lands, Cattle, Farming.—Of Flanders.*

THE circumstances of the times, and of this journey in particular, must, I see, inevitably give a political turn to this correspondence; and as I cannot have much new information to give you concerning this country, I may therefore indulge in a variety of speculations as things occur to call them forth. The poverty and oppression of the lower classes, the injurious division of property, in this and many other countries, produce a variety of reflections on the fate of man, on the management of society, &c.

Is there no kind of government yet discovered that can be established on principles of gradual improvement, instead of  
going



going in a contrary direction? No one that should keep pace with the advances of men in the other arts? For all, or most of those that have hitherto been seen in the world, seem, by degrees, to degenerate from the time of their first institution, or subsequent revolutions, each of which seems to contain the seeds and necessity of others.

I wish to believe our government improving, but am often in doubt. In your House of Commons there appears, in the operation of Mr. Grenville's Bill, a small source of amendment; gradual, and therefore proper for a time of peace. This may, at length, prepare the way for more important and salutary reformation, provided you can preserve and profit by it, before more mischievous defects overtake you. Seizing the opportunity of improving the mode of election in your boroughs as they misbehave, may have some good effects on the constitution; and it may restrain the daring spirit of corruption within the bounds of decency, and make them at least

least pretend to honesty: the necessity of concealing a crime must tend to impede and diminish it. If the wisdom and virtue of the nation could once be collected in its councils, great and beneficial measures might no doubt be adopted. The people selling their votes shews that those votes are worth something, and the price may serve as an estimate of their importance. But in such a system of corruption, how long they can retain those votes to sell, and how soon they may be brought to sell the right itself, are questions of importance.

But to proceed with our French journey. On looking over my journal, I find the chief part of the travelling notes turn upon agriculture,—on different trades in towns and villages,—price of labour; in all of which the striking circumstance is, that government, on every occasion, and in every respect, too much interferes.

Many letters might be written on each of these subjects, by those who love to be particular

particular and voluminous. But I deal in generals, and love brevity ; and you possess the useful arts in England to a more perfect degree ; so that there is little to be learned here, but from their faults.

You may partly know, from various authors, how the progress of agriculture, and the other useful trades that are connected with it, have been obstructed here by a variety of causes besides those of superfluous and oppressive regulations : but to investigate those causes on the spot, may be the most important lesson to be learned in this country. I think they may mostly be traced to the nature of their government and taxation, to their religion, laws, manners, and character. The chief of these causes may be, *Arbitrary power*, which probably must inevitably be often tyrannical and unjust ; their bad *tenures*, and want of long leases, few exceeding three, six, or nine years ; the few *proprietors* of the land have been obviously the dictators of all the laws concerning it, and their interest always preferred to that of the many  
who

who live and labour on it: hence the poverty and want of *farmers*, the lands being generally cultivated in *metairies*, or by hired labourers, who pay or receive a certain proportion of the produce. Their *taxes* are injudicious and oppressive, in the arbitrary manner of laying and of levying them; some on the apparent stock of the tradesman, farmer, or labourer, and often laid by those who levy it. *Entails*, particular *privileges* and exemptions in favour of the noblesse and the church: temptations held out to their natural vanity, which prevent the necessary accumulation of capitals by industry. All run to buy titles or privileges as soon as they can; while these at once feed their vanity, and give them more power and consideration than wealth and industry, they will probably continue to prefer mediocrity, or even poverty and dependance, with a title, to the condition of rich and comfortable tradesmen or merchants; and their government goes on to encourage this disposition. Hence the poverty of the lower classes, and the want of taste in the higher for an industrious



dustrious or a country life. Some think the *church* the best landlords; they may not be the worst, and are perhaps too indulgent; but we have only to look at their *lands*, and see that they do not improve beyond a certain, rather low, degree; while those estates that have been secularised in other countries are improving daily, and have doubled and trebled in value since they were taken from the church.

I believe I mentioned to C—— their childish vanity, and perpetual desire of society and amusement, which draws them together into towns, and helps greatly to prevent their acquiring a taste for the country. May not we conclude that this government does not know, or does not chuse to apply, the true principles of national prosperity? and yet the world is full of their writings on those subjects.

The corn countries of France are mostly, I think, what we should call a light soil, not much strong clay, or rich mould, nor what we should esteem a fine country.

Though



Though there is, perhaps, less waste land than in England, I do not think that their soil in general is so far superior to ours as some imagine; but it would require much time and examination to determine such points with any certainty. We must, however, except some parts of Normandy, Burgundy, and generally the land on their great rivers, especially on the *Loire*, which is beautifully wooded, a rich and productive soil, and well peopled. Indeed most of their wine countries are rich and beautiful, though not in our stile of beauty.

The scarcity of cattle, of pasture land, and of the cultivation of artificial grasses every where, sufficiently shew their deficiency in husbandry; unacquainted with the advantages of a change of crops, and of a sufficient stock of cattle, of converting arable to pasture, and the reverse: I believe that the same crops of eternal corn, with perpetual plowings, must not only impoverish but pulverise the soil, increase its natural dry and light quality, and render it unfit for grass or meadow, without more

expence, labour and skill, than the proprietors could furnish. The few whom I have seen attempting to turn some lands to grafs for English race horses, their present passion, have not yet succeeded well, after several years experience and great expence. I want your intelligent tradesmen to visit other countries; a travelling farmer might be of more service to his country, than all your gentlemen of learning and *virtù* who run through Europe \*.

But I should perhaps have said something about *Flanders* before we proceed farther; though so near, I think it is not so well known as it deserves †. These two neighbouring countries, France and Flanders, form a curious contrast; the first being remarkable for poverty and nastiness, and the other for wealth and neatness, with other

\* Mr. Arthur Young's travels and knowledge may be of great service to the public, especially if the most useful parts can be afterwards extracted and abridged, and the *debit* or sale extended, by diminishing the size, and the price of such books.

† Mr. James Shaw has since remedied this defect, by publishing a very agreeable account of Flanders.

striking

striking differences. I do not find the decay of the Flemish towns, nor of their trade, to be so considerable as generally believed. Those towns are yet noble, venerable, wealthy, and industrious, and their country the best cultivated of any in Europe; all this, with the freedom and happiness of the people and their government, render it altogether more worthy our attention perhaps than France. We owe a particular attention to that country from whence we had, probably, both the loom and the plough, with other useful arts, and where agriculture is still kept up to perhaps a more useful degree of perfection than even in England itself: they may not have so great a proportion of fine parks, fine horses, and variety of cattle as we have, but they have enough, and only for utility; and throughout whole provinces, have neither fallow, common, nor waste land.

The spacious *Schelde*, and beautiful romantic *Maise*, you must see, and particularly the latter, where you will find all the

means and the materials of riches and industry, woods, coals, mines, people: the trade and navigation of both might be doubled and trebled, but for the selfish tyranny of the different states through which they pass. If the seventeen provinces, according to the first idea of their revolt from Spain, could be reunited under one good government, it would be a noble country, and a respectable power. Charlemagne chose his capital between the Maïse and Rhine. But on approaching France, the baneful influence of that government, the effects of French laws, and French leases, soon begin to appear. Even in French Flanders, though the same kind of soil with the Austrian, waste and fallow lands, weeds and negligence, begin to be seen; and as we advance into France, many other sad changes for the worse we are doomed to experience. We gradually lose the noble spacious farm houses, with great barns like churches, in exchange for wretched half-ruined hovels; we leave the comfortable neat Flemish dresses, for French rags, dirty woollen night-caps, wooden shoes, and every

every mark of misery ; in short, we have left order and neatness in every thing behind us. The most grievous, at present, seems to be the loss of those clean and ready Flanders maids, for these dirty saucy men-servants. This inconsistent prejudice in France, where the women have so much influence, of employing men instead of women servants in almost every department, is not easily accounted for, and to me is truly disgusting. From the kitchen to every part and office about the house, you will, in many parts, meet with no other servants but men, generally nasty impertinent fellows, and my great aversion ; though we see the women labouring in the fields, at the roads, and performing the office of ostlers in the stables. The French being considered by many as the nastiest people, for a civilised nation yet known, may be greatly owing to this custom of domestic male servants.



## L E T T E R   V.

*Of Travellers.—Society.—Two Classes—Of  
Paris, and the Learned.*

To Mr. A. J.

Paris, 1777.

I FEAR you begin to expect too much from me, and depend too little on what you have read and heard. I doubt there may be but little in France that is new to you, and that can be communicated in this way, nor any very useful lesson to be learned, until we discover some new defects, something to find fault with by way of text: for from faults and defects, I believe, we are more willing to learn, than from precept or imitation. There is often something very amusing, and not ungrateful to the mind of man or woman, to hear a country well abused, or see their foibles turned

turned into ridicule. Among the various travellers one meets with, I think the fulky and fatirical are not among the least entertaining or useful; and I believe, that as much is to be learned from the blunt or bitter humour of some old English travellers, as from that eternal affectation of pleasantry or complaisance which is now so much in fashion, and which is probably as prolific a source of misrepresentation, as any other humour or prejudice whatever. The conceived necessity of seeming always pleased with every thing, however disagreeable or even detestable, must mislead and bias our minds and our pens, as much as the other extreme, the ill humour of those *Anglois atrabilaires* whom we have seen pesting and swearing at all they met with out of their own country. I should think a little old fashioned English sincerity and good sense to the full as becoming in our travellers, as those constant attempts at trifling wit and pleasantry, or that perpetual grin of *politesse*, which we are now so ready to borrow,

and awkwardly imitate, from these our agreeable neighbours.

I believe you remember the gentleman who returned to England immediately on seeing a French kitchen; and my fellow-traveller, who had determined to pass the rest of his days on the continent, on finding at Calais that he could not have beef-steaks well dressed, set off next day on his return;—and our friend S——, who left Spain directly when he found he could not have melted butter to his veal, which had cost him so much pains and money to procure.

Within those extremes of natural bluntness and acquired affectation, there are travellers of great variety of species and character; and to each of these, objects will appear very different. The accounts honestly enough given by one, may to another appear fallacious; so that we may all write on, and still find subjects enough to employ our pens, as well from the variety

riety of unexamined matter, as from the different sight, character, or views of the travellers.

But to return.—I believe I meant to say something about some of their towns; but do not be alarmed, for I mean not to trouble you with descriptions, because I think they never convey the ideas that are designed.

And first, generally,—From a kind of childish dislike of being alone, which they call love of society, the French live much in towns, so as to play at cards, and have little taste for a country life, notwithstanding what they may tell you to the contrary in their books. As still a worse symptom of their taste, the people of best fortune get to live generally in the central and most unwholesome parts of a town, leaving the out-skirts and fine situations to poverty and nastiness. For the whole seems divided only into two classes, the extremes of society, or the few rich, and the many very poor, with too few of those middle ranks  
which

which form the best bonds of society, and the strength of the nation. Most of this you may already know;—only let me desire you will trace the causes and numerous consequences of this injurious division of rank and property, when you visit these countries, for it is of great consequence to society; the remedy is difficult, and requires more wisdom than can even be expected in an arbitrary government. In this you may trace, perhaps, the inevitable decline of Europe. Such objects are worthy of you as a philosopher, a soldier, and probably a future senator.

I need not trouble you much about this fine city, *Paris*; though superior to London in some very material things, yet I think it inferior in many others. Though superior in public walks, libraries, palaces; London has certainly the advantage in the other essentials and comforts of life. I like their boulevards prodigiously,—a very extensive open walk, without going out of town, with such variety of buildings and amusements; it inspires one with some



ideas of liberty, till by approaching the Bastile at the end of it, we are put in mind where we are. But the streets of this town are shocking. You must either ride over people, or be ridden over.

I cannot say I like the generality of these Parisians, nor can think them near so amiable as they do themselves. Most of them who have not travelled, I fancy, you would think intolerably conceited and ignorant,—at once polite and impertinent. Compliments do not constitute civility. Their attention, so far from civility, is often rudeness. We can too often discover that they meant no kindness to us by their compliments, as we might at first imagine, but only to shew themselves off as superior to us. I do not mean by *Parisian*, any of their people of the *first fashion*, for they are, in general, perfectly polite, easy, and genteel, and perhaps more amiably so than our own.

You know there are many of the learned and wise here, as well as of the agreeable;  
but

but the former are not yet so often to be found among the latter, as you may fancy, from knowing, it is become the fashion for authors and men of learning to be admitted into the first company more than formerly. However, we are pleased to see some of the learned and philosophic of both sexes taking the lead, even among people of the first rank and fortune; and if they go on, we may see Plato's wish accomplished, and the world governed by philosophers. But hitherto I doubt if authors be always the most improving or desirable company. Some, engrossed and led away by books, are thereby less acquainted with, and less fit for, the world. Others, absent, reserved, and austere, already embarrassed with a reputation which is to be supported with great caution and artifice; embroiled in the vanity and intrigues of the world, their works and opinions already known, and operating like religious prejudices which can seldom be touched, or must be supported right or wrong; their conversation is not always so frank and intelligent, nor  
so

so edifying as might be expected from their knowledge.

The young, if studious and unprejudiced, full of information and curiosity, as yet eager after truth, and only in the progress towards reputation and author-craft, are probably the best worth knowing,—the most friendly and communicative, particularly with strangers; but such men are not easily to be met with, as they do not waste much of their time with the cards and nonsense of common societies.

## L E T T E R VI.

*French Character, and national Taste.*

**T**O draw the French character with the justice and precision I could wish, would require more penetration and labour than I can claim, or have leisure to bestow. I mean to give you only a few of the striking features as I pass, and to deal more in blemishes than in beauties.

When we travellers can be honest enough to give you things as they strike us at sight, I fear that the faults will always stand first. The foibles and defects of this people must make the first and strongest impression. I believe there is no great danger of the two nations soon becoming very fond of each other. The one values itself on the kinds of merit which are neither esteemed nor wanted by the other. The French must despise the English solid sense, and independent

pendent spirit, perhaps as much as we do their *esprit, graces, agrements*. They must dislike our fullen, proud, awkward manner, as much as we do their conceit, vanity,—*leur manieres avantageuses, l'envie de se faire valoir, leur fatuité, &c.* It requires some time to discover, through their politeness, how much they dislike us.

Yet, if it were not for a war now and then, I should fear our assimilating too much towards these our agreeable neighbours, and our meeting them more than half-way. Though few of them will probably ever have good sense enough to be much pleased with ours; many of us are apt to have good nature enough to like both their manner and their manners, *leur franchise, leur 'babil*, and many other less important agreeable nothings about them.

They may hate us, while we despise them, and contempt may be full as powerful in its effects as hatred. Yet I believe, we shall generally find many more English in France, than French in England. Perhaps



haps some of us come here in order to get rid of our ill-humour, or to vent it on them, like those who keep an humble dependant to scold at. Although we may reciprocally improve by intercourse, and it might be better for mankind were nations to mix more with each other, yet one would wish each to retain their native character,—that national stamp which discriminates it from the rest. In order to this, it may be well to dwell on the faults we would wish to avoid. I shall therefore go on, as at first proposed, picking up a few of them *en passant*.

Though the national or prevailing character here, like that of other human beings, is mixed, and made up of good, bad, and indifferent qualities; yet such parts predominate, as make the composition of a Frenchman very distinguishable, and different from any other :—but to know him, you must live with him ; reading about him is insufficient. You will find, for example, *qu'il ne se suffit pas à lui même*, but lives by the breath and opinion of others more than on his own.

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He will sacrifice every other comfort of life to the ornament of his person. The lodging of a very fine *petit maitre* here, is often too mean and dirty for a taylor's journeyman with you.

In them, all is borrowed, *postiche*, and very little natural; *ils veulent toujours représenter*—their life is a mere parade. Yet they only copy from each other (*tres moutonniers*), while we are always flying off into singularity, hunting after nature or reality, but perhaps with less success in our attempts than they in theirs.

They seem ever changing, but are still the same. It is only we that really change, with all our apparent steadiness and gravity.

The *Frenchman*, though sociably disposed, with all that enviable *gaieté de cœur*, and affected goodness and consideration for others; yet as he is not in the habit of doing any thing essential for the public, and but little for his neighbour, and it is, perhaps, the lot of that kind of vivacity and flow of

spirits, to be capable of but little feeling or humanity; he is probably, on the whole, therefore a more selfish being than the *sulky Englishman*. I think I see here, instances of the selfish prevailing over the friendly qualities, rather more than with us;—the æconomical, or parsimonious, over the generous,—the cruel and unfeeling over the humane,—*l'etourderie* over sentiment,—a false taste, or *gout postiche*, over that of nature. Besides particular instances, one sees it in generals,—as in the severity, and negligent composition of some laws, and in the mode of execution:—in the general preference given to liferents over any fixed future provision for posterity, or relations. Perhaps we might infer some want of feeling or humanity, from their want of taste for the simple beauty of nature and of action; and we may perceive, in the different degrees of art, passion, or music, that they feel nothing, till the expression is carried to an outrageous and vulgar extreme, certainly beyond our line of beauty. But they like it, and that is a short and sufficient answer to all our

objections. It is needless to dispute about taste. While they can relish only those degrees of violence and expression, they may laugh at our criticisms.

The degree of expression in all the arts must be tempered to the tone of mind of the spectators, more than to the true nature of the passion to be expressed. In a state of ease and tranquillity, a refined audience will not readily admit of the violence of real passion, nor of any of its distortions, beyond a certain limit of the graceful and temperate. This limit may be extended, but should never be broken, by previously warming up the mind by successive or accumulating impressions. The French will never probably understand the natural repose of true and graceful dignity.

Without the constant force of some foreign aid and intercourse, national character and taste must perhaps generally revert into some confined tract or circle. And when national pride, conceit, and



ignorance are planted, they readily spread, and tend, like other evils, to perpetuate themselves.

Though many of the French are now liberal, and willing enough to get rid of the shackles of nationality in taste and character; yet, after a certain age, it is perhaps more impracticable with them, than with those of any other nation, to succeed. Some of them satirise and abuse their own nation, and praise others;—affect to extol the Italian school in painting and music;—imitate English manners; and all the while remain mere Frenchmen. In order to change or improve their taste, they would have to combat many inveterate habits, of which they are not aware; and the causes of their peculiarities they themselves are unfit to investigate. In short, they appear to us a different species, *une race apart*; this they forget, or never perceive. Their authors talk of man and woman, and fancy they speak generally of the whole race, and know not that they speak only of French men and women; fancying all the world  
like



like themselves ; forgetting that French nature is not human nature, and that few of their qualities are common to the species. Only a chosen few of them seem to have any *minds*, the rest have only *senses* : nor can I yet find any one term in their language to express what I here mean by *mind*. Even their senses appear to us defective, or different from ours, as if too quick and too weak ; they can perceive only certain things and distances : though more lively, and perhaps sensible of some things which escape us, yet I think we have many perceptions which they overlook, or do not reach. Unfit for meditation, in the exercise or agitation of the senses consist their chief happiness, and particularly in that of the sight ; they are all eyes, and can sacrifice real comforts to please that sense. When that agitation ceases, *ils s'endorment ou s'ennuyent à la mort*.

The numerous clergy and military form the life of society in France, and, together

with the ladies, assume the direction of every thing. The female graces, and facility of expression, are as remarkable as their influence. I think you will find vanity the universal, or ruling passion here.

## L E T T E R VII.

*Fine Arts.*

I HAVE seen their biennial exhibition of paintings, and wished to be more of a connoisseur on your account. With my small degree of skill or taste, I am inclined to believe they have hardly a painter, at present, above a second or third rate, except *one*. However, I think I have seen some young students who promise well, and may contribute to revive true taste, and the great style, provided they travel in time: this is indispensable. Their present mode inclines too much towards those *fa-daises* of *Dreuse*, which, though often pretty and nicely executed, are so far beneath that first and grand style of painting which tends at once to forward that delightful art, and to elevate and improve the mind, that we are at a loss where to rank these things, —these pieces from common life!—and

French life too! they may have some merit in their way, though not equal to that of Hogarth's pieces of the same kind, nor of equal spirit or moral tendency.

Let us by all means imitate nature;—but there is surely a choice or selection of objects, by which the true judgment of genius is distinguished, and we must rank the elegant and sublime above the mean and affected. There is an universal beauty and elegance, which is not of any particular country, but to be culled from all nature, or conceived by a warm and elegant fancy, within the power of nature, but beyond what she has been known to produce: she furnishes hints as points upon which genius builds, and almost creates.

Their sculptors have succeeded, I think, better than their painters, and have frequently come nearer to their masters the Italians and Greeks than any of us. But a little French affectation often intrudes even into some of their first rate compositions,

tions, and which, to me, always spoils the effects of the whole piece.

I believe their modern art of *dancing*, and their *theatres*, have helped to vitiate more than to improve their taste in the fine arts. I often fancy that I see, in many of their best performances, some of their dancing or theatrical ideas of grace, which, to me, is generally mere affectation, distortion, or grimace. This is copying from a copy, and a bad copy, instead of going to the original.

From this general censure on their artists, you know I except one, viz. *Vernet*, who follows nature, and chuses well, and is, I think, classically elegant in some things ;—but he studied in Italy, I am told, from a child. Their merit, as already hinted, in the arts, has generally been nearly in proportion to their assistance from Italy. The causes, or at least the means of their great progress, during the time of Lewis XIV. arose chiefly from thence. They were then liberal enough to shew to whom they owed  
their



their excellence,—to imitate the Italian school, and encourage their artists. Since that period I do not find they have improved, but on the contrary declined, as they returned to their national conceit and contempt of strangers, fancying themselves superior to the Italians, and to all the world, in every thing. There is scarce an Italian artist now to be found in all France, while they are giving immense prices for little Dutch and Flemish pictures;—both bad symptoms. I believe there has hardly ever been a great artist among those who never saw the Mediterranean, nor Italy. An acquaintance with the nations that surround that sea, I consider as a necessary part of education, and especially for artists. I am inclined to believe that none of us can well arrive at the first degrees of excellence in any thing, without leaving our own country early, and frequently taking enlarged views of men, of nature, and of art. I doubt if the French have any other way left to be great in any thing, but by leaving their country very young, and staying away till they almost forget they are French, and  
till

till they acquire other habits and ideas, and exercise their faculties and their organs on other objects, and in a different manner from what can be done in their own country. This, as it may appear singular, I must endeavour to explain some other time.

You know the French have an academy at Rome, but their natural conceit has likewise rendered it almost useless to them; for the regulations require the students first to have gained prizes at home, and be completely fixed in their national manner, before they go there: whenever they get there, their chief object is gained; they seem to sit down almost satisfied with that trifling distinction, and are not often much inclined to labour afterwards for more fame.

All this, you will readily conceive, is speaking rather in a general and indiscriminate manner, for which you will make some allowance, and recollect, that the exact truth cannot always be expressed, and much less

less in few words. They have now some promising young artists, who are aware of these national defects and impediments; and others will probably arise and execute finer ideas, and in a better manner than have lately appeared here; and will revive that proper respect for Italy, and the remains of the ancients, which is always the concomitant of real merit. They may emulate, without being confined to their own great masters, for you know they have had very great ones. You will begin to think that I am likewise becoming a connoisseur, like most of our travelling countrymen, who seem so generally to be engrossed and infatuated by the pursuits of *virtù*.—I shall, however, pursue my reflections.

The fine arts are, doubtless, entitled to our admiration and esteem, and considered, even abstractedly from the pleasure they afford, may tend more to the benefit than the prejudice of mankind. But their good effects will depend much on the objects about which they are employed. In this, some  
of

of the ancients were wiser, or more fortunate, than we, in employing the painter and sculptor to promote public virtue by the public commemoration of great men, and great actions. And I should have more respect for those arts now, if they could be made to unite in producing some more public good, of which I can still see the possibility. But while we see them confined to a few great towns, and there, among a few great families and churches, the only seats of elegance and luxury, while misery reigns throughout the rest of the nation, these fine arts become no very favourable symptoms of the advancement of human happiness, or of the science of government.

Religion has latterly been the chief object in which the arts have been made to join their aid with those great effects, which I could wish to extend to more general utility. But in this progress, I fear we have lately lost, instead of gaining ground. I cannot but lament that our religious reformers should have thought it necessary to  
dismiss,



dismiss, at once, from our churches, painting, sculpture, and music. May not we hope that some of our princes or bishops will be able to recal them to their station by degrees, as useful knowledge and elegant taste extend their influence? We ought not to despair of such a revolution, when we know that even some of the Mahomedan princes contrived to admit the arts, in spite of their religion, though it seems to have been established on purpose to exclude them, to promote ignorance, and destroy the mental powers.



## L E T T E R VIII.

*Commerce.—Manufactures.—Reflections.*

THE French, with all their industry, are not yet a commercial nation, though their government appears at times to be smitten with some temporary fits of supporting trade (perhaps because it is the fashion), and have even taken part in the modern absurdity of *commercial wars*. They would not have much occasion to depend on the precarious resources of foreign commerce, if they could make a proper use of the advantages of their situation—of the fertility and extent of their country. But *that* again would require a degree of liberty and security, and a kind of government of which they are perhaps now incapable.

Even if commerce should appear to become more necessary to them, in order to contend with other maritime powers, if they  
are

are wise, they will consider well before they attempt to sacrifice their military to their commercial character. While the romantic sentiments of honour can produce certain effects and exertions, it would be unwise to substitute the love of wealth, which might not operate in the same manner.

Considering, however, the difficulties there must be, under such a government, to attract or raise great capitals, and to employ them in any scheme of commerce or manufacture, they have succeeded amazingly in some things of the kind. You know their success in silks, and in some sorts of woollens, which might succeed still better if less burdened with regulations. Their *goblins* is an elegant manufactory. *That* company has a monopoly for dying certain colours. This we should perhaps think oppressive, but here it may have good effects. Like the royal manufactories in some other poor nations, it may be the only means of retaining them in the country, and of supporting the quality and reputation of the goods; operating somewhat in the way that  
our

our statutes of apprenticeship have been supposed to do: and I suspect there may be truth in that supposition, and wisdom in the institution; for, in countries where apprenticeships are not rendered necessary by law, I think the workmanship of every thing is inferior. I wish you could persuade some of your dyers, and others who work in metals, &c. to study chemistry, and could give a better education to your tradesmen, and to the lower people in general.

The manufactory of looking-glasses likewise, so well known here, is a noble and profitable work, and well conducted. Eight hundred people are employed in one building. You may attempt it in England, but cannot, I fear, succeed near so well as here; for there will not be near the same demand. The superior luxury and riches of this great country,—the fashion and taste of the people for that ornament,—their having the start in the methods of working, and in the markets of Europe, are causes quite suffi-

ent for holding their great superiority over all competitors in this branch.

The porcelaine fabrics, which many princes seem of late so fond of promoting, can be of little service, I doubt, to a nation,—only so far as they may be the means of improving the public taste, and those we call *earthen ware*, which, being of common use, are of far more importance. Though, in these last, they are trying some of our late improvements at *Rouen*, as well as some of the cotton velvets, I have no dread of their being able to rival our friends Bentley and Wedgewood, nor the arts and methods so far before them, and long established, at Manchester, and elsewhere.

When will nations be cured of the folly of attempting to supply themselves with every thing by their own hands? How much better to take of each other whatever is the most natural and convenient produce of each? This may open a fertile source of  
inter-

intercourse, and of future benefits to mankind.

Though this is now become a very liberal nation, or rather produces many liberal individuals, their reputation in this too is beyond the reality, as in many other things. The reputation is acquired by means of many little arts, and of their pretty little language.

Though doubtful if their government will ever be liberal enough to open their ports with us on a fair and equitable footing;—though their politics have generally been too artful and cunning, and consisted mostly in little tricks, and in outwitting even their friends—a great fault, and too much imitated;—yet let us hope, that some liberal prince, or minister, may dare to lead them right.

It is more from ill-humour than want of knowledge, that nations do not yet lay their commerce more open to each other. Let us hope that some of them will soon



break the ice, and others may follow. As our friend Adam Smith's book comes to be more generally read and known, I think his principles must prevail, and contribute greatly to open the eyes of nations to see their own interest; and it may, in that case, be of more service to the world than any book that has appeared since Euclid.

The French would willingly persuade themselves, and the world, that their country is improving very fast: but of that, I doubt even the possibility under such a government. Their having advanced so far, under so much oppression, is really wonderful; but I suspect they cannot go much farther. The fine arts—the trifling arts, may yet advance a little; but I doubt the country, and the people, must long remain nearly as they are, or go backwards.

A few philosophers in the capital may write very good books, and may fancy they are improving their nation, and the world, at a great rate, and all the while  
their

their names are scarcely known in the provinces, where it requires far other efforts to banish oppression, civil and ecclesiastic, against the interest of the more powerful supporters of established abuses.

Book-making is a very considerable trade in this country; and they are thereby better known, and rather over-rated, in other countries. Europe pays them, in this way, a considerable and voluntary tax for the pleasure and convenience of their agreeable, and now almost universal language.

Thus, I am at length gradually brought back to the subject of your last,—to the province of fancy, taste, and literature; where, I grant you, something must be frequently picked, to mix up with the dry materials of mere utility, and to season, where possible, the bitter or insipid draughts of common or laborious life. But the return is now too late, and must be referred to the next.

## L E T T E R IX.

*Artists. — Nationalites. — Theatres. — Reflections. — Language.*

IT may presently be seen that the arts have been encouraged here more than with us, and with more success at one period; though I think they have at others gone farther wrong than ourselves. Although they have had very great masters, and the names of Poussin, Le Brun, Le Sueur, Girardon, &c. will always stand high in the lists of fame, yet the national taste has been but little improved by them; and the general style of drawing, of ornament, of architecture, is still almost as viciously national and capricious as before the time of those great men. They have more great works to shew than we have; but, at the same time, more bad taste. The moderns in general have been sinking, and are now far beneath the schools of

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those great masters: but I think the French have sunk lower than any of us, and more than was to be expected in so great and polished a nation.

There is now however some hope, I think, of the revival of true taste and genius in the competition of those two great nations, France and England: but we must all have recourse to Italy for that purpose; and must there labour yet long, before it can be accomplished. In *that* progress, we shall probably approach nearer to each other, and may agree better in taste and opinions; though, in many things, each will most likely always retain its peculiarities.

There are some early habits more obstinately retained than others. Our taste, for example, in cookery, in amusements, in dress, and ornaments, I think we seldom change; and we are more firmly attached to particular dishes, plays, actors, and singers, than to many things of greater importance. Though men and nations seem born to differ wherever it is possible, yet

where the general principles are obvious, we must often be of the same opinion. We may agree with these people about a problem or a picture, but we shall perhaps always prefer roast beef and Shakespear to soupe and Racine; while they, as constantly, remain in the opposite taste, and prefer the latter.

Their music, and some of their theatrical amusements, are certainly full of bad taste, as well as with us, though we differ widely. Truth is but one—errors are infinite. In order to get into the right road that leads to improvement, to truth, beauty, and nature, we must first be forced from our national prejudices, by early and frequent travel, and must become intimately conversant with the arts, taste, and people, of other countries. Even then, our labour is only begun; much will afterwards depend on the wisdom and encouragement, and on particular institutions, at home,—on education—on fashion.

You



You know the French have some good comedies; and their spirited and agreeable manner is well suited to comic action. Indeed I consider them as the first comedians in the world: but their tragic action and declamation, of which they are so fond, I think wretched; consisting mostly of a kind of furious or outrageous bombast, which I believe seldom fails to disgust strangers at first. The Frenchified Greek and Roman characters, which they shew on their stage, are like nothing in nature; but appear to us a ridiculous sort of *caricaturas*, blown up by a puerile or petulant kind of passion, unworthy even of the children of those manly people. Though the French seem to like all sorts of violence in action, declamation, &c. and prefer their wretched tragedies to their excellent comedies; yet I do not think they feel much with the actors, nor can be considered as fond of tragedy. They are always disposed to be pleased, and seem to distribute their applause in proportion to the exertions of the actors, though ever so extravagant: these are generally in extremes,

tremes, which are usually distorted and ugly; they are always ready to burst on every trifling occasion of passion: so that they, as it were, at once overshoot the mark, and leave behind all those natural gradations or transitions in the passions or affections of the mind. In short, their players, *toujours prêts à créer*, seem to have very seldom any idea of a truly great and dignified character; and but few of their poets have arrived to the sublime or natural, on any subject, and still less in the operations of the human passions. The great characters which they have attempted to delineate, from whatever country they are announced, generally turn out to be mere Frenchmen.

The causes of those things, and of their appearance to us, may be various and complicated: yet I cannot help attributing much of it to their language. Wherever the great passions are concerned, the strange magic of this language with me is such, as to turn the hero who uses it, into a *faufarou*, and the finest air, in singing, into a vulgar

vulgar howl. But the most powerful, though distant, source of all their *égaremens* in these various walks of fancy and genius, is probably a false or defective taste for the beauties of nature, and their want of inclination for a country life: this again may proceed from their government, manners, and ways of living. Things are wonderfully connected in this world. Perhaps till we see their farms and country-houses improve, we cannot expect them to produce a natural poet, painter, or actor. There are moral as well as natural qualities that exclude each other. These people, with such wit and vivacity, must perhaps be proportionally deficient in judgment, and must be oftener wrong than some of their cooler and sedater neighbours. This to many appears to be actually the case. But their genius is again rather restrained and shackled by some other circumstances—by those already mentioned; by the nature of their government—by the formation of their language, which, though a very fine one for some purposes, is confined, and unfit for others, by being idiomatic and affected.

affected. But I may have occasion to return to these subjects, where sounds are concerned; and the size of the paper, as usual, relieves you for the present. I shall however fill it up with an observation I think I have read or heard:—that within certain limits or paths of their own, the French have probably more variety and grace in their writings than we,—more and nicer shades and distinctions in expression and manner:—but I think they seldom or never arrive at the same *force*, in thought or expression. They have many pretty ways of *insinuating* what they mean; but seldom any of our forcible and manly ways of *speaking out*: and, when they attempt it, *ça devient de fanfaronades*.—’Tis the swelling of the frog. The language naturally made for graceful trifling, cannot, it should seem, attempt the sublime or magnificent, without bordering on the ridiculous.

## L E T T E R X.

*Of Travelling.—Observations on arbitrary Power, &c.*

PARTS of our journies have been rather too much hurried for me, and we had not always opportunities to stop where I wished, in order to examine, or to reflect or converse on what we saw. But I believe that is often the case with most travellers: so that many wise reflections, that might thus have been produced, must now be lost, and thou go uninstructed to thy grave, as the clown says.

I grant you that an Englishman may live tolerably well in France, and be well enough amused, as many of us have experienced: yet I doubt if there be much real and useful instruction to be acquired. In the useful arts, we are already before them;



them; and in the fine arts, though we have not done so much, we have not gone so far wrong. Though these arts have not been so much cultivated and encouraged among us, what we have produced is more within the bounds of simplicity and nature; and we have not, like them, quite so much way to go back in order to regain the right road.

With respect to what we may learn on any moral subjects, as of law, government, or manners; their national character, their taste, their passions, are so opposite to ours, that I often doubt the use or applicability to us of such knowledge. Their life must seem at first to us unnatural, and they themselves a species apart from the rest of human nature: yet there is so much inconsistency in mankind, that these very people take the lead in almost every thing, and are obsequiously followed by the rest of Europe. There may be sufficient reasons for this, when we come to examine the matter. Somebody has written a book called *l'Europe Française*. Some of the Asiatic people

ple call us Europeans all by the name of *Franks*, and consider us as one nation. We may thank the French for bringing us all to that resemblance.

Various reflections will naturally occur to an Englishman, when he surveys, even here, the consequences of arbitrary power: among the most striking of which will be the poverty and oppression of the lower classes of society.

This government, since it got the better of the nobility and the Protestants, overpowered all opposition, and destroyed all the traces of freedom, has hitherto behaved wonderously well, considering its unlimited abilities to do otherwise with impunity, and the natural effects of uncontrolled power on its possessors. This may perhaps be attributed to the accidental influence of polished manners, science, and civilization: but I would not promise or depend much on the continuance of such moderation, nor on the duration of such casual influence. We can already trace the

the footsteps of despotism here, and perceive her careless and unfeeling indolence, with many unguarded strokes of her natural pride and insolence, and can see that she must, soon or late, break loose from such feeble restraints; and that philosophers, women, and public opinion, will not always be a sufficient cheque even to her caprices. Though this tyranny is not yet so bad as that of eastern despotism, it may terminate somewhat in that way in due time: the people are already obviously impoverished and oppressed. Effects must follow, and be proportioned to their causes. Of the possessors of uncontrolled power, a great majority will probably always be spoilt by it, in some degree,—bodies of men still more than individuals. How different the behaviour of a Cyrus, or an Alexander, before and after the possession of power? Even the Romans, when once triumphant, soon lost sight of the wisdom, justice, temperance, and moderation, which had laid the foundation of their empire.

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The ancient European nations maintained, for a time, that free and independent spirit, which had been their characteristic, as wandering tribes. But in that state of society and knowledge, no system of precautions and control could be foreseen or established, sufficient to secure their usual freedom against the encroachments of tyranny, which must follow the influence of property, now superadded to the military authority of their chiefs. The warlike forms and order of the field, transplanted or continued to the fixed society, in time produced the feudal system; a species of government which was soon found to be incompatible with civil liberty, and which abolished all former ideas of independence, and of the equal right in each man to whatever he might lawfully possess, though ever so small; till society came gradually to be divided into tyrants and slaves.

One of the necessary productions of that system, and perhaps the best, was that barbarous species of perpetual war, which came afterwards to be a little softened and

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humanized by the romantic sentiments of chivalry. War exercises and maintains some of the noble and manly exertions; and those who fight are always good for something.

As men acquire freedom and security, they are known to improve in arts and industry; in dexterity and division of labour: thence a greater number may be maintained in idleness, and the powers and the happiness of the whole society are considered as thereby increased. But such is the love of power, that slavery would most probably have maintained its ground, though so obviously against the interest of the whole, and particularly of the masters, had it not been for certain accidents and changes in manners and ways of life. These proceeded probably, at first, from that madness for the cruzades, which so generally infected Europe, and of which the history is sufficiently known. The necessary expences attending those expeditions, some increase of knowledge, taste, arts, and luxuries, brought from the East, produced



duced considerable changes at home; among which was the circulation of property, and the release of numbers from a state of bondage.

The church, you know, likewise lent a helping hand to the abolition of slavery, partly from religious, and partly from interested, motives. But domestic freedom could be fully established only in those countries which have entirely broken and thrown off the feudal claims. In the decline of that system it was still doubted by many, whether the abolition of slavery would be of advantage to the people in general? Though it has undoubtedly proved so in England, and some other countries, the advantages may perhaps still be doubtful where the absolute power of *one master* has succeeded to that of the *many*; and were it not for the advances made in arts and civilization, it might yet be a question, whether the despotism of *one* would not be worse than feudal anarchy, where that *one* was not a very good man, and a firm and enlightened

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philo-

philosopher, which we have reason to fear would seldom be the case if the ancient ignorance still prevailed ; such princes being even now rare, with all the advantages of modern knowledge and education.

## L E T T E R XI.

*Of Studies and active Pursuits.—The French and English,—their Governments.*

I MEANT to give you some travels, as well as reflections; but I think the latter will encroach upon and fill up most of your paper. As there may be but little that is new to you remaining for me to tell of these countries, and as I am perhaps naturally more of a projector than a retailer of facts and particulars, I shall probably go on frequently to indulge in various speculations upon different subjects, as they may be called to mind by what I see.

In my journal I find several things about French literature, of which I mean to give you some extracts, as memory and occasions may answer.

In France, and indeed throughout Europe, all things seem in a perpetual change or progress, which is governed by fashion. Even virtues, talents, change their places and degrees of estimation in a short time. In one age, all for fighting; another, all for study. Since we began to prefer idle to active pursuits, and to take more credit for what we know and can talk of, than for what we can do, we have fancied every thing was to be learned from reading books, when not too idle even for that occupation.

One perceives these things more obviously here in France, though they probably read less than you do. Some of their most sensible men, I think, place too much dependence on books, and almost forget that reading can never entirely supply the place of practical knowledge, though a very necessary assistance in order to know or do any thing well. To acquire universal learning, they seem to think one has only to consult their dictionaries—the form into which they have thrown every art and science,  
from

from cookery and hair-dressing, up to every useful trade and species of philosophy: a manner of writing which may be of great utility to mankind, if they are taught to take it only for what it is worth, and not to depend on it too much. I wish such books to be reduced in size and price; but they seem, on the contrary, growing bigger and dearer. They might be made to serve as memoranda in all the arts, but cannot teach them. Every thing that facilitates knowledge to the people, and tends to render each art and science universally known, must be of service to mankind in general; and their benefit and convenience is certainly at least of equal consequence with that of those few who depend entirely on books for their knowledge, and who are not generally of such importance to society. You have observed, *chez vous*, some who, after the most laborious literary researches, were found to be novices among the first people of practice with whom they had any thing to do, till they began to discover how far behind real practice, books generally are in most of



the useful branches. They may be necessary in every kind, even of practical knowledge, to a certain degree; but then you must know where to doubt, and when to leave them.

When the importance of education shall be better understood, and men shall have learnt to estimate things nearer to their real value, books may more nearly keep pace with practice, and be of more use to it; and mankind may not then be divided, as now, into two classes—the few who read and depend too much on books, and the many who do not read at all. Theory and practice may then become better acquainted with each other, and some practical science descend to the lower and most useful ranks of men.

In the French there is an apparent mutability, but at bottom a real sameness of character, through all the known periods of their history. Although, in some former times, they may have stood higher as to  
power,

power, arts, science, taste, and great men, there are certain peculiarities which form so inseparably a part of their character, that I believe they must have been nearly the same sort of people at all periods, whether as ancient Gauls, or Francks, or modern French.

But with us English, there is a real fund of mutability, so to speak, if we are considered either individually or nationally. You know we are reputed as changeable as our climate. We have been a very different sort of people at different periods—before and after the Reformation, for example. We have taken a new character even since the Revolution, and differ much in our manners and disposition since the time when Erasmus visited us; and in our temperament there are perhaps yet the seeds of future revolutions.

In the French I see no sufficient causes of any great future change or progress; and they are not now perhaps capable of procuring

procuring or executing any species of government, very different from, or better than, what they at present possess, and which is perhaps now so well adapted to their character, to their habits of thinking, and ways of life, that a much better may not be wished or expected.

There are doubtless many degrees of good, short of perfection, which is not to be obtained in this world, though it is of vast consequence to keep it in sight, as well as the right to the freedom of investigation. Since we see that these people can be tolerably happy in their present condition, it may be said that the ends of government are fully answered, as the best could do no more. Yet, as English, we must still see deficiencies in this their present condition. With all the advantages of a natural, cheerful, and happy temper, together with the best government they can expect to enjoy, we must still doubt if they ever can acquire that dignity of nature, and sense of security, which can alone produce the efforts, the enterprise, the public spirit, and progress

progress of improvement, observable among a free people.

Their government must now, especially in its internal operations, probably always partake of the national character, and of the defects incident to unlimited power—prudent and artful, rash and unsteady, enterprising or indolent, by turns—wisdom and folly, spirit and weakness, mixed, or alternately taking the lead. But the unfeeling indolence and arrogance of despotism must perhaps be expected at length to predominate.

With such a government, whose character and operations must at best depend so much on fashion, or on the views and disposition of an accidental minister, mistress, or favourite, and not upon a fixed constitution, measures must too frequently change with men; and the completion of any thing great, that requires much time, can hardly be expected.

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This must be understood only of their internal or domestic government; for in their foreign politics they have generally been steady, deep, and artful; perhaps too artful, so as to create suspicions, and put nations on their guard, and throw them into confederacies against their secret arts and growing power.



## L E T T E R XII.

*French Pre-eminence, — Arts, — Trades, —  
Intercourse.*

I N every country there is probably something useful to be learnt; and to this, which has been so long the leading nation in Europe, we all resort, on purpose to learn almost every thing. I think they deserve that pre-eminence, in some things; though they themselves are too apt to fancy that they do in all. They may go on to deserve it still more, by means of the very advantages attending that pre-eminence. Those advantages are many and important. The various and valuable articles of commerce, the motives to industry and exertion of mind, which the universality of their language and their fashions have procured them, contribute much towards making them an industrious and almost commercial

commercial people, in spite of their government, which is naturally rather careless and oppressive. Though the concession of this pre-eminence gives them conceit, it brings emulation along with it, and promotes a beneficial activity in the provinces of taste and useful science. If the state could be forced into more wisdom and benevolence, it might employ more effectual means towards their preserving the lead in many more things of real importance to national prosperity.

Even the article of books, which they write and print for all Europe, is no inconsiderable means of both riches and of extensive influence, though the Dutch have industriously drawn to themselves a share in this branch of trade. The universal prevalence of French modes and manners likewise facilitates their schemes in foreign politics, which I think they understand much better than they do the principles of domestic prosperity. This, with an assiduous and liberal attention to their ministers and consuls abroad, gives them an  
ascendency

ascendency in all the courts, and a powerful, though secret, influence, to the opposite extremities, of Europe. You know they govern Spain, though you all seem ignorant of the nature, history, and extent, of that connection: and I am told that they have been even attentive, like the Jesuits, to the acquiring some secret influence in the education of as many as they can of the young princes in Europe; and that they hope, by such means, to guide the next Czar of Russia, who is already much of a Frenchman.

If this reign continues steady to the principles in which it seems to begin, they may long lead and manage the politics of Europe secretly in their own way, and carry all before them.—Nay, you yourselves may now be only acting in obedience to some of the secret impulses given or promoted by this court. We already see, and may learn, from Madame Pompadour, and others, that one of their maxims will be, to persuade all Europe that they ought to be jealous of the English, who must  
therefore

therefore be brought down : and they may now succeed. It will probably long continue a great object with each nation to reduce the other, even at the expence of reducing itself much more. How much better for each to try to raise both ! but especially for France, as she would, in that progress, gain still a greater superiority. They might govern the world, if they could keep steady to their principles and to their allies, and not grow insolent by success. But perhaps that is not in human nature ; and still less in French nature. With success, a nation never knows where to stop. Greatness knows not where nor how to set bounds to itself, but generally overshoots the mark, and wears itself out. Prosperity not only spoils us, but creates us enemies. Our late successes and superiority, in this century, cannot fail of producing yet more combinations against us, probably before the next.

But, as I was going to observe, though we are probably before them in most of the arts and trades, that are of the greatest use



use to mankind, yet there may be much to be learned in this country. The arts and trades form a very extensive and curiously connected system. Those of different countries, and even those of the same country, have yet much to learn of each other. An intelligent artist or tradesman will always find something to learn in so active and industrious a nation as this; and I am pleased to see our manufacturers travelling here:—our Bentleys, Coles, and others, from Birmingham, Manchester, &c.

The provinces of taste and utility are more intimately connected than the world in general have formerly imagined; and happily, the useful arts are not now beneath the attention of the scholar and the gentleman, while your tradesmen are not all destitute of an useful and liberal education; though there is yet great room for amendment in that way. As those classes approach each other, the better it must be for the whole; for the different classes of arts, sciences, and men, and for society in



general. In most other countries, the fine and liberal arts are, as yet, the mere appendages of luxury; they stand alone and aloof from the other arts, their poor relatives, and are therefore of little service to the nation.

The philosopher rejoices to see them descend among you to an acquaintance with their humble brethren; and all, by mutual assistance, promoting each other's interest, which then happily coincides with that of mankind. While you continue to know this, you will yet more liberally promote and facilitate education in general; the reception and encouragement of strangers of merit; the travelling of proper students to other countries. Your different trades, companies, manufacturers, should all zealously contribute to support, for example, such institutions as your Royal Academy, with other more scientific schools, and enable them to send youth abroad: you may thereby go on to improve and preserve such a superiority in every thing you produce, founded on scientific  
and

and mechanical knowledge, and good taste, as will force them into every country, even in spite of the confined and selfish views of their most foolish and tyrannical governments.

But if ever you come to be so conceited as to fancy you want no such foreign assistance; that you can proudly stalk on alone, and still preserve your superiority; it will be a certain symptom of decline. Shut up in your own island, you will quickly barbarize into circumscribed nationalities; will sink and follow the fate of all nations who have ever given up, or have been deprived of, a sufficient intercourse with others. However, let not students of taste stop long in France:—let them get on to Italy at least, where some gems will always be found among their rubbish, by those who can distinguish. Nay, Italy is yet the country—the capital of taste—and the other nations are only the distant provinces of that empire. Thither must all artists resort to get rid of their provincial and vulgar manners. That

people, though now so despicable, if once united under a good government, I make no doubt would again soon rule the world. Their talents, their language, would soon appear to be capable of every thing, if these were once employed and exercised on objects worthy of their exertions.

## L E T T E R XIII.

*French Conversation and Societies,—Language,—and Singing.*

I WAS forming for you catalogues of French authors, with some short remarks, but I now learn that such things have been already so often done, that it must be needless to fill up your letters with such intelligence. The French, you know, have long and liberally encouraged all the arts and sciences, and have generally presumed to take the lead in learning as well as in taste; and, what has still more influence, it has lately become the fashion, among both sexes, to philosophize, and form societies for that purpose. If this taste should continue for a sufficient length of time, the French ladies may prove to be very good philosophers themselves, and may help to make many others. They may be the means of extending knowledge,

and of producing such beneficial effects as would here be impossible without their influence. Students may certainly meet in France with more assistance, and more readily in Paris, than with us, in conversation, in public libraries, and lectures.

Conversation is the *fort* of this people. From thence we may gather more pleasure and improvement than any where else. They are so thoroughly agreeable and communicative, and always ready to give you all they know: so that the reading of a very few may serve the whole nation, and also benefit many of us visitors. You may meet here with whole societies, genteel, agreeable, and apparently well informed, where only one or two, or perhaps none of them, ever read; not even on the subjects upon which their society is formed, and their conversation chiefly turns. They pick up what they think sufficient information, at second or third hand, among their friends. The knowledge of one thus spreads through a great number; and hence their knack at talking so well on  
subjects



subjects which they have never studied, and which they surprise us by seeming to understand almost as well as many of those who have gone through all the tedious forms of the schools.

It is difficult to gain admittance to the best company here, as well as every where else. Nor in any country do the comfortable, little, sensible, and familiar, societies easily admit of strangers; and still less of foreigners: but where, by letters or friends, you are once received, you will find them more communicative and agreeable than almost any where else. However, I think, the most sensible and best informed among them have, like those among ourselves, something reserved and retired, and even sometimes *un peu misanthrope*. Shall we doubt if knowledge encreases our happiness? We may,—if the knowledge of men's follies and wickedness is to keep us perpetually out of humour with them.

Doubtless some of these observations must have often been made before, though

I have not seen them, having purposely rather avoided reading much on those matters, that I may, without prejudice, see with my own eyes. Others have occurred, on attending with a little more application than time and opportunities had hitherto permitted me to give to their agreeable language,—to its sounds and formation. With all its defects, it is certainly the language of prose, as somebody has observed; and more especially of conversation. You see it has already been, and may still be, of great service to mankind as a general and convenient medium of communication; and now in possession of that privilege, will probably keep it, were it only from the central situation of this country; as several nations; in order to visit each other, must pass through France. The French seem formed for social intercourse, and their language made on purpose to indulge them in it.

Though their conversation is, in general, trivial, to a degree beyond what you  
may

may conceive, yet the power of custom or habit, together with their agreeable manner, their delicate pronunciation and phraseology, will soon render most of it at least supportable, and much of it highly agreeable. As we become greater adepts, and can express ourselves with ease, many new beauties and delicacies of the language begin to appear, and to please us. We become better pleased with ourselves; and that helps greatly to embellish every thing around us. And among such a variety of people, a chosen few may always be found who are at once learned, sensible, and agreeable.

Still I think, for some other purposes, this language is defective or limited. Consisting much of fixed idioms and favourite expressions, though clear and precise, with little variety of order or arrangement, in some researches it may, like books in general, carry the mind a certain length, or in a certain tract; but then it will tend to keep it there, and furnish but little encouragement or assistance to go farther. For these, and  
other

other similar reasons,—from an affectation and refinement peculiar to this people, and generally the fruits of civilization,—from the composition of its sounds, articulations, and accents,—I think this language almost totally unfit for poetry, and entirely unfit for music. But to see how insensible the natives are to these defects of their own language, is vexatious and melancholy. One of the heaviest taxes I have to pay for living among them is, being obliged to hear them sing. For though their language is so totally unfit to be sung, and they themselves, with that unfortunate manner of theirs, such horrid singers, yet, from one end of the kingdom to the other, they are eternally attempting it. I have more than once been obliged to change my habitation in order to get away from some singing cobblers or servants. Our own manner of singing is not perhaps a great deal better; but we are not so fond of teasing other people with our performance.

Whenever we treat of sounds, I think terms are wanting, and must probably be  
always

always deficient or inadequate in representing to the eye the objects of hearing. The French way of singing may be called a bursting, and the English a choking, manner: the first, an outrageous and vulgar expression of passion or of bodily pain; the second is the expression of nothing, but a kind of false and unfeeling notion of grace. Both have generally some kind of violence or uneasiness in the manner and expression, which gives pain to the unaccustomed hearer. The climate, the language, give generally to our northern female voices a kind of harsh or defective tone; and to the men a hoarse or choking one. It is only some of the bass voices, in either France or England, that I can bear to hear with any pleasure. The voices to the north of the Alps and the Pyrennees are all, I think, very distinguishable and defective.



## L E T T E R   X I V .

*On the Revival of Taste and Science, and  
Decline.*

WE have reason to be both thankful and surprised that science and good taste have recovered so much and so soon from the blows they have received at different times, from various causes. They began to decline with the fall of the Greek empire, and almost totally expired with that of the Romans, by the irruptions of the rude northern nations. Their revival was long prevented by that excess of wild devotion which cautioned and prejudiced the people against the prophane learning of the Gentiles, and banished almost all ideas of the beautiful and sublime. Latterly, after a considerable restoration of taste and science, by the Italians, and the riches of the church, our happy reformation certainly reverted a little towards barbarism,  
by

by a puritanical enthusiasm; and by excluding the fine arts from the temples, gave them a check which all your riches of commerce and freedom have not yet been able to recover; nor probably ever will, till you become liberal-minded enough to admit them again to that sanctuary. Genius requires the attention of a whole public, and her works must be judged by the world at large. The private wealth and private houses of rich individuals, though a considerable assistance, can never, I fear, prove an encouragement nor a theatre sufficient to excite her greatest exertions, or to inspire her sublimest enthusiasm. Though our church is now neither so rich nor so powerful as formerly, yet she might still encourage the arts, and might furnish the motives they probably want the most, viz. those proceeding from honour, competition, liberality, public spirit, devotion.

Your Royal Academy, while directed by the good sense and good taste of a man who forms an æra in his country, doubtless  
has

has done, and may yet do, much towards the revival of true taste: and it might yet do more, if half of those works it has produced could be kept together, to form a lasting exhibition,—a perpetual school, and a visible history of the progress of the arts; whereas the effects of those works are almost lost by their dispersion and disappearance after a short glance of the public eye. Greater and more magnificent, more public as well as more permanent exhibitions and encouragements, are necessary. Honour and fame are the great objects of genius, more than pecuniary rewards, which, by a wise and liberal admixture of honours and attentions, may be economised and made just sufficient, for they may be too great as well as too small;—so far are riches alone from being competent to the purposes in question. The advantages of the churches, and of a few public galleries, contribute greatly to maintain a taste in the arts in some countries, even in spite of the oppressions of poverty and despotism.

It

It may be time to take precautions likewise against another source of the decline or corruption of taste. The love of ornament is progressive, and insensibly steals upon us, with the progress of civilization and refinement, to a vicious excess: and they who bring us back towards simplicity, before we entirely lose the relish for it, surely deserve well of the public. I suspect your having lately advanced too far in this career. Let us hope that your gentlemen of taste and science, your president and some others of your first artists, may succeed in correcting or recovering you from that distempered taste which, I fear, was leading you fast towards a decline, through the usual road of indulgence in perpetual change and novelty, long before you had reached the summit of elegant simplicity and the true sublime. Your *collifichet* of a thing for a public bank, certain houses, rooms, and ceilings, gave but too many indications of your going too fast and too far. Perhaps no ornamental architecture higher than the Doric, or at most the Ionic, ought to appear to the open air,

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in your climate, and more especially in great public buildings. Of the fine arts, architecture is probably the first that does and should improve, and has a tendency to give a tone and some limits to the rest. But perhaps it cannot so soon advance to any great height in a brick country.

Besides, the taste of commerce and of suddenly acquired riches, is seldom chaste. The possessors are in too great haste to enjoy every thing with a coarse and untutored appetite; they must have butter to their pork, as the Spaniards say. It is the rich *bourgeoisie*—*les parvenus*, who lead us on to those vicious excesses in ornamental taste, while the people of real fashion and knowledge strive to keep us back within the bounds of good sense and moderation. Let us therefore encourage the simple and sublime, while we have yet some relish and some advocates for it. It is to be hoped that one who should build like Jones\*, or write like Swift, would still be liked.

\* Covent Garden church.

You



You know I am a staunch advocate for visiting other countries, as a necessary part of education. In short, I think all who can, should travel, and especially your artists. Without this, the arts cannot be sustained among you, not even up to their present degree of mediocrity. Without a constant communication with other nations, your taste and your works of art will be apt to favour of your separate and insular situation. You will get into narrow and limited paths of your own, and become mere mannerists, at best; and your productions will be marked and vulgarized by something peculiar, like a provincial accent: or when you venture out beyond such limits, you will probably be enticed into those of Affectation.—Pray beware of that bewitching jade:—but I think few of the moderns can entirely escape her.—It seems as if she had taken up her principal abode in this country.

Your travellers should not all be confined to certain fashionable tracts. There are countries as yet not much explored, where even the works of art may be worthy of

some attention; and others where those of nature, of society and manners, assume to us unknown, but never uninteresting, appearances. You should sometimes get out of Europe, were it only to look back upon her at a distance, and there consider, compare, and estimate, her arts, her superiority, her sameness, from new and different points of view. Spain, the north and east of Europe, may furnish many objects interesting to the artist and philosopher, and not yet much known. And beyond those limits, among Moors, Turks, Tartars, and other Asiatics, you may gain more various and enlarged conceptions of mankind; and you may there easier guess at what the Greeks and Romans were:—other ideas of grace and manner may then occur which you could never have acquired in Europe. Our notions of what is graceful are too apt to be confined and local,—either national, vulgar, affected, or fashionable: even that which is reputed genteel in one country, will not be admitted to be so in another, and is often, in fact, only some temporary or whimsical kind of affectation.

## L E T T E R XV.

*On Women.*

To Mrs. P——.

THE women of this country, their singular, and, I think, superior, character, claim a great share of attention both from the natives and strangers; and tend to furnish me with some perhaps new ideas and speculations on this and other connected subjects. The natural ease and boldness of their manner and deportment, the numberless graces of their address and conversation, their familiarity and facility of access, their restless vivacity, their extensive knowledge, the credit and weight of their opinions, are all very striking to a stranger; and being generally enough known, I shall not dwell upon them. Our ideas of their indelicacy being measured by a standard of our own, and taken from the

excessive nicety of our own *petits maitres et petites maitresses*, other nations do not readily admit of nor understand. However, I think the two nations may in many ways improve each other; and a female character, formed of the best qualities of both, might be superior to either: our ladies might perhaps be improved by the acquisition of some of their *franchise* and bolder graces; and theirs, in their turn, by a little of our female *naïveté*, sensibility, and ingenuous simplicity.

You know I have long entertained some opinions concerning women, and the female character in general, which may appear rather singular to some, though not to you; and in which I am the more confirmed by what I have been led to think and observe here. You and *Twee* have contributed largely to lead me into these notions, and are therefore bound to correct and improve them\*. I think then, that  
 women

\* Those two valuable women, Mrs. Pilcher and Mrs. Commissioner Proby of Rochester, will long, long be feelingly

women have nowhere yet attained their proper place and uses in society,—not even here in polished Europe,—though the example of this leading nation shews us at least the possibility of it, and that we may now be in a progress towards the right ideas on this point.

I have thought that the best remedies to those evils mentioned in my last, and to many others, may be hoped for, from the admission of women to a better education, and to more influence in the councils of taste and learning; and it might perhaps be as well if they were not entirely excluded from any other councils. Happily they

ingly remembered and lamented by many as superior characters, and singularly confidential friends to each other. Their exalted good sense, their sentiments and ideas, went far beyond the age in which they lived, though not a bad nor an ignorant age. Had they been spared to us a little longer, these Letters might have made a better appearance. Their friendship had this singularity in it, that the discovery of the merits of each was owing to the other. —The truth of this, and the reality of their great sense and merit, are become more evident since their death.



seem of late to have gradually risen in consideration and utility in this and some other countries, and it is hoped they may go on to rise to that equality with men in natural rights, and in the use of their talents, which seems intended by nature. The rank and consideration of the sex must probably always follow the degrees of civilization. Yet, in the history of nations, we see great variety in this; and we know from Sparta, that a wise government might do much towards modeling their character, and directing their education to the public good.

From such gradual improvement of the sex, and hence in the constitution of society, consists the only hope I can see of a remedy to that growing disposition to indulgence, affectation, and perpetual change, which attends on civilization, arts, and taste, and which so soon entices us out of the paths of good sense, that we are so long in finding, and which finally leads to ruin. In Europe, to stop this progression, would not probably be either practicable or  
 advan-

advantageous: to retard or direct it aright, seems to be the object that we should keep in view, and can only be attained by the assistance of the other sex. Of the attempts of eastern legislators to arrest the natural progress and improvement of the human species, the effects and success have not been such as to be recommended or imitated in Europe. Were this a country of freedom, and the female education to go on to be yet more liberal and manly, in addition to their present numerous and agreeable acquirements, from the joint endeavours of both sexes, I can conceive this might then be a pattern of good government, and, as a central and leading nation, might really improve the rest of Europe.

The talents or abilities of the sexes are probably nearly equal, when equally cultivated: or, if some mental constitutional differences exist, these are not greater than between individuals of the same sex, and not beyond the power of habit and education to assimilate and equalize.

Among the most perfect animals, the sexes seem to approach the nearest to equality. In the human species it is difficult to determine which sex has the advantage. In considering those small native differences, I am sometimes inclined to give it in favour of the female character. If the men have some important advantages in mental and bodily force, the female mind seems to inherit others more numerous, and to be more universal. Formed, as it were, of a finer paste, women seem to possess greater degrees of sensibility,—quicker and nicer perceptions. They are thereby admirably well constituted to be our companions and assistants in almost every occupation; more tractable, easier taught, and moulded into habits, they possess from nature, or can sooner acquire, the most essential habit of controlling and regulating self indulgence. They can thus more easily stop the source of the most destructive passions, and hence of the greatest evils in life: and, when once raised to all the influence and knowledge of which they are capable, they may teach us to do the same.

On

On temperance, or the management of indulgence, depend our best habits and dispositions,—the enjoyment of everything,—the duration of good taste, of life, of society itself.

Even now, if we were strictly to estimate the consolations the sex afford us, the patience and other virtues they teach us, how much of our happiness, and even of our wisdom, proceeds from them, we should perhaps be astonished, and too proud or ashamed to state fairly the account.—How much more might we not expect from their talents and their virtues, if these were properly improved by education! We may venture to predict that they will always answer and repay all the endeavours and attentions we may chuse to bestow on their education; and will generally keep up to any opinion and expectations we may venture to entertain of their character and abilities; and, in short, will always be nearly what we chuse them to be. I think I have observed, in several different countries, that wherever the men

and



and women live, and are most employed, together, there results a similarity of character,—the powers and exertions, the good order, of the whole, are much increased. Such are the countries in the northern mountains of Spain, among some of those in Switzerland, Germany, and, remarkably so, here in France. The effects of a thorough subordination and separation between the sexes, as in Asia, the character and condition of society in such countries, are well enough known, it is hoped, to put us on our guard against every thing that has a tendency towards such absurd and pernicious tyranny, the natural enemy of social happiness, and of all the elegant arts in life. From the constant intercourse and mutual inclinations of the sexes, and their perpetual efforts to please, proceed all the fine arts and elegant refinements, and most of our best habits. Women should perhaps take the lead in these, as naturally the best judges of elegance of every kind, in men and things, personal and intellectual.

Fine



Fine taste in Greece and Rome has been seen to decline through an excess of ornament; and, in more modern times, we have seen her take nearly the same route, through the *concetti* of Italy, and the *cul-tos* of Spain: and I suppose we have no right to expect that the leading nations of the present age, France and England, can avoid the downhill paths that seem marked out by nature for arts and civilization. If possible to retard or avert this natural decline, or to change its course, I think it must be done by the good education and joint endeavours of both sexes.

Though a proper education has seldom but by accident fallen to the lot of women, those accidental instances are in favour of the probability of success, if more generally attempted. The pains bestowed on them are seldomer, I believe, thrown away than on the other sex. As we open to them the sources of science, and of the most manly virtues, we shall find they will plentifully partake. Their more pliant character and understandings will be readily raised and improved,

improved, and they will amply repay us with interest, as companions and assistants, as mothers and tutors.

The union of acquired dignity with their natural softness, of the manly with the benevolent virtues, would produce the most extensive and beneficial effects on society: and accordingly I think we find the few accomplished learned and manly female characters, that are known in history and in our own times, have generally had all the success, and have produced the effects, here indicated; and they have been the means of raising themselves, and mankind around them, to their highest honours. Among the instances that may be taken from the times of chivalry,—from England, Russia, and from the catalogue of sovereigns in general,—the females certainly outshine the males, in proportion to their numbers. And all know the influence and importance of great and wise women, in families as in empires, from the mother of the Gracchi down to our present queen.

When

When we become wise and liberal enough to elevate and improve, and sufficiently consult, the sex, we may acquire from them every virtue and every sentiment that leads most directly to happiness. They will teach us to control our passions, to regulate and œconomise our pleasures, and, instead of promoting, they will set bounds to luxury and indulgence, and will stop the decline of good taste with that of manners and morals.

## L E T T E R XVI.

*The same Subject continued.*

**Y**OU may be sure I am pleased that you agree with some of the opinions hazarded in my last. I shall go on to finish what I have to say on the subject, though the digression should extend farther than I may yet foresee. I do not pretend to build a new system, only to mend the old; nor to turn women into men, but to make them yet more useful and agreeable to us. And I think the objections you mention, and several others, would be easily answered.—But I shall only detain you by a few more remarks as they occur.

Though we should grant that our living so much with the women indiscriminately, as the French do here, might not answer so well for us at present; and though the  
company

company of the giddy and unthinking fair might, at first, tend to enervate and induce to idleness, and neglect of more serious and useful application ; give them a liberal education, and suitable employ, and the danger will cease. If some of them are now too gay and thoughtless, the best remedy will be the endeavouring to make them less so, and not by running away from them. While we preclude them from every occupation that gives self-importance, from all management of the public, and even of their own affairs, we have no right to complain of the consequences, of which a life and character of idleness and dissipation may be among the least pernicious. To attempt depriving them of their natural influence, would be futile, and a beginning at the wrong end ; rather qualify them to exert it to some good purposes. If, by the addition of knowledge, reason, and dignity, they become quite irresistible, so much the better then ;—they are nearly so now, without all those qualifications. In short, since we have begun to raise the sex from servitude, we must probably go on, till we bring



bring them as near to an equality as nature will permit. There is no medium in this. They cannot stop long where they are. Every remaining mark of inferiority only so far debases their minds, and sets them upon restoring that equality by secret and sinister arts, which must participate too much of deceit. We must, doubtless, allow them every art or artifice that tends to render them more amiable, *et a far la ritrosia*, where nature seems to have made it necessary,—but no more. While we render it necessary in most of their conduct, we shall have to complain of their deceit and duplicity.

Most of the present striking differences between the male and female character, are more the effect of art than of nature; such is the power of education, which ought to be employed in improving, and not in debasing nature; and should not be used to widen that separation, but rather in bringing them nearer together.

The

The female dress should have a nearer resemblance to that of men,—and especially when they ride, which they should also do like us. In England, their present silly and perilous mode of riding is ascribed to Queen Elizabeth,—but it is now surely high time to leave it off. I rejoice to see that some women of fashion have sense and spirit enough to adopt, on that occasion, our dress nearly, and our manner of riding entirely, and in most other countries, to see it common with all ranks: and to see the female riding-dress approaching gradually towards a resemblance to ours. They ought to wear drawers under their present, or some more graceful, long dress; though not quite so long as the present fashion: the sex would certainly gain by shewing a little more of their legs:—there is a just medium between shewing all and concealing all. Such things, though apparently trifling, may have great influence on the female character.

But the French must probably long lead the fashions in dress, and several other

things. How many follies, and how many improvements, does Europe owe to this nation? Had it not been for the prevalence of their manners, Italian and Spanish jealousy would probably have extended throughout Europe, so as to exclude the sex almost entirely from society; whence arts and civilization would gradually have disappeared,—despotism—barbarism would again have reigned over the face of the earth. However, in this of prescribing our dress, it is rather doubtful if they are entitled to the authority they have so long assumed and exercised, with such a mixture of sense and levity, of good and false taste. In their pursuit of variety, it is however rather surprising that they have hardly ever stumbled upon any dress of good sense,—on some Greek or other graceful and convenient mode of clothing ourselves. We also owe to them this violent and ridiculous difference of appearance between the sexes, as if they were animals of a different species. The mode of dress I think of more importance than  
generally

generally believed:—but I will not detain you with it.

Every thing that tends to produce an equality and resemblance between the sexes, I think of consequence; and to me it is pleasant to see them approaching towards it in this country;—though one would rather wish the women to become more manly, than the men more feminine, which is too often the case here. Though we act the tyrants over the female part of society with more politeness than in some former and ruder times, yet all the romantic nonsense of modern gallantry and affected regard for the sex, the remains of chivalry, though better than nothing, we know to be an insufficient restraint on man, and on his real power and assumed superiority. I fear nothing but a legal and acknowledged equality, and a liberal education, can secure to women their natural rights and influence, nor give to society all the benefits of their powers and talents.



Many of those female weaknesses which we term delicacy, &c. and pretend to admire, we secretly laugh at;—or when our taste is so far vitiated as really to like them, it is chiefly from their being symptoms of inferiority and subordination, that soothes and feeds our pride and domineering spirit. In that road we may go on to endless and unnatural refinements, if not controlled in time;—but for that purpose we want wise and manly women, who, for our sakes and their own, must shame us out of such nonsensical weakness, and bring us back to sense and nature. Beauty belongs more to strength than to weakness.—Nay, force is necessary to beauty and graceful motion. The best statues of Venus, and still more of Diana, are so well proportioned as to give ideas at once of strength, agility, and of beauty. Strength of body and of mind are perfectly compatible with softness and gentleness of manner.

Though it has been observed that mind is of no sex, yet there must doubtless be always some obvious and radical distinctions



tions between us in character and occupation. I only plead for those distinctions being reduced to what is absolutely necessary, and no more. The resemblance can never be complete, and must ever be sufficiently limited by nature. The merits and effects of this way of proceeding would depend more on the constant endeavours towards an approximation than in the completion of it; as human happiness, in general, consists more in action than in the acquisition of that rest and repose which seems to be the only object of all our activity.—Only remove the too great diversity and separation of our occupations and education; let the tasks of life be properly divided between us, and carried on by mutual assistance wherever it is practicable, and they will be much better performed. Then the great diversity in education will become not only less necessary, but still more inconvenient and pernicious.

## L E T T E R XVII.

*The same Subject continued.*

I CAN readily obey you, and go on with the favourite subject of my last, though the digression may appear tedious to some of your society. You, and certain French ladies, led me into it, and others come just *apropos* to detain me there. Some of them are certainly charming creatures! so lively! so intelligent! *et remplies d'esprit, de graces, et de science*. We have just been to see palaces, churches, and pictures, with Madame M——. Her conversation is delightful,—free and manly, yet with sufficient delicacy for me, though not perhaps for all of you, with your cold English refinements.—Her observations shewed great judgment, taste, and even genius. She has been criticising their philosophers, one by one, in a fine strain of graceful good humour

humour and good sense, and with a fund of science, as yet but too little known among our English ladies.—But she unluckily would favour us with some of her chosen *airs d'opéra*,—*et d'un gout et d'une maniere*,—*a faire pitié*,—*enfin nationale*.—What a pity they cannot have a better taste in music,—but, I fear, it is impossible with such a language as theirs.

Perhaps it is happy for this country that the women have acquired such influence, take the lead, and govern in almost every thing: and hence it is perhaps, that things go on so much better than could be expected with such an arbitrary and unfeeling government. Though this is a corrupt and intriguing kind of influence, and would be far better if established and avowed, yet even now it is much better than none. They are probably the means of mitigating the follies and natural severities of tyranny, and the cause of much good being done which would otherwise be neglected; and, in conjunction with the philosophers, they may come to guide

and direct the public opinion, which must always be respected by the most absolute governments, and is so here, to a degree you might not expect.

Although, with us, the impediments to the elevation and proper employment of women, are probably greater than in France, from certain differences in opinions, manners, and ways of life, and as the sexes with you are not occupied, nor live together so much as they do here; yet we too can boast of many excellent female characters, and of several of those self-taught female writers who have made a figure, and have probably done some good to mankind by their writings. Our women are certainly formed by nature equal at least to any others in several essential qualities,—in beauty, in sentiment, —with the finest hearts and affections,—warm and steady in their attachments. But we cannot contradict the stranger, who finds them generally cold and reserved in conversation. Their apparently insipid manner probably strikes foreigners, who will  
require



require time and experience to discover that there can be any warmth of soul under such cold appearances. However, an useful and manly education, built upon such solid good qualities, would give them a prodigious superiority.

Private domestic education I think generally the best, especially for females. If this should luckily ever prevail over that of boarding-schools, the defects of the latter must surely become more and more conspicuous; for they will probably grow worse as the expence of them increases. The world will surely soon begin to see that the time and money bestowed,—the false and useless ideas,—the habits of idleness, indifference, or extravagance, all too generally acquired in those seminaries,—is paying much too dear for the chance of a few very unimportant accomplishments, and in which so few make any progress equal to what they probably would do at home. Though some of those schools are well conducted by excellent and valuable women, yet such places can never sufficiently



ently resemble families, which are the foundation of society, and the materials of which it is formed ; and in them all the duties and habits of life should be acquired.

Mothers, though frequently with us, as yet, but moderately accomplished, might nevertheless instruct their children and themselves, at the same time, by a very little foreign assistance. In this way we might produce more superior female characters, and more mothers properly qualified for this duty ; and we should thereby, in my opinion, improve the world very fast.

Nor can I conceive with some, that we should have less, but certainly more, conjugal happiness in the world, by an increase of female wisdom and knowledge,—by means of more numerous and more important objects of mutual intercourse and employ. I have known examples that confirm me in this opinion ; nor can I relinquish it on account of one or two studious females, who have been perhaps too  
much

much engrossed by some favourite branch of study, and who might seem to neglect themselves and their families in other things.

It is generally admitted that there are many more employments and professions well adapted to the talents and temperament of women than they have yet exercised among you, and which they might probably fill with at least as much credit and propriety as men:—but in all, I would have both sexes to join in some degree, and each to lend the helping hand of relief, whenever it is possible. Women might be of great use in all the learned and sedentary professions: these, in my opinion, might then be carried to greater perfection, and with much less confinement to the studious, if both sexes were properly qualified to assist and relieve each other. There is not a more unnatural being than a man whose life is totally engrossed by what we moderns call learning. The confinement and exclusive attention to books will generally destroy or impair his natu-

ral vigour and activity, till he becomes a weak, unhealthy, and a very helpless creature.

Women we have seen, in some countries, uniting their exertions with those of their husbands and relations, even in laborious employments; and I am glad to find that of late it has become more customary in your manufacturing counties.

Proceeding on this principle, I think that the children of both sexes should be educated together and alike, as far as propriety and manners would admit, which would be far enough for every good purpose, if it were once the custom. But we are now prejudiced and accustomed to a separate and totally different education, as if we were beings of a different species, without connection or intercourse, and each sex is to be prepared for employments or professions in which the other is not even supposed to judge, and therefore cannot assist. In families where brothers and sisters are brought up a good deal together,  
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it has been observed that both are the better for it ; and the most manly of the sisters, who keep up the nearest to the brothers in their laborious exercises or employments, are generally every way the superior characters.

Men who are subject to the mean jealousy or fear of female learning or accomplishments, instead of making use of them, are certainly not the fittest to dictate in this matter. Nor do we find those who pretend to be so highly disgusted with learned or masculine women, to be the most manly or learned of men. That little jealousy or dislike we may rather consider as an indication of some meanness, false delicacy, or other deficiency of character or education. We had much better improve and make use of their talents, and we should then find them of infinite use to us in many subjects. When we act the legal tyrants, and frame laws, regulations, and opinions, that concern both sexes, we ought certainly to consult the other, especially



cially when they become capable and worthy of being consulted.

We English, I fear, were the farthest spoiled, and were becoming quite singular, in these feminine ideas of delicacy; we were growing really ridiculous, till some ladies of rank and good sense, I am happy to see, are bringing again into fashion to be manly and unaffected. Some of your little snarling authors, too, pretended to join the cry, and to dictate their little national prejudices for the government of the female world: but I hope your ladies will have courage enough to go on to be as manly or learned as they please; they will have the men of sense, and the laugh, on their side, against the fribbles and triflers, who are, to be sure, as yet by far too numerous among you, and who are not yet ashamed to miscall your manly and resolute women by the opprobrious names of masculine creatures, horse god-mothers, &c.

While in this disposition, which you may think too French and too favourable  
to



to the female part of the species, I am inclined to believe it highly probable that the greatest perfection of which society is capable, may depend greatly on this approximating equality of the sexes,—on our accumulated talents and joint endeavours being applied to most of the studies and occupations in life, and thereby all the powers of both being brought into use.

All the countries I have seen have helped to confirm me in these opinions,—those where men and women are the most separated, as well as those where they live most together ; and I think the advances and civilization of the species may every where be measured by the degrees of general intimacy and intercourse of the sexes.

## L E T T E R XVIII.

*Education.*

THOSE ideas of women, into which I have been led by you, and the manly agreeable females of this country, have induced me to think and inquire about education, which also appears to me here, I think, in some new points of view. The school education in France is seldom, I fancy, preferable to our own, and often worse, though that of the world may be better with them. Their seminaries and colleges are still so over-loaded with superstitious ceremonies, as to impede the progress in useful knowledge, and to terrify reason out of her way. However, society and conversation afterwards make some amends for those early errors and deficiencies; and though this occasions a loss, at least of time, it serves to shew the advantages

tages of educating more by converse and practice than by books, and the probability of success, if we were to apply the minds of youth rather more to practical and useful objects, than to books and speculative systems. This was the manner of the ancients, and we may regret that it is not yet more practised among us.

Your national predilection in favour of too frequent a separation of the sexes, even in their earliest instructions, with other similar ideas of false delicacy, I begin here to consider as the produce and the bane of mistaken civilization, and as impediments to a right education of both sexes. Unless some wise legislature, or some female good sense, come in time to your assistance, I fear you may go still farther into the errors and extremes of a refinement which knows no bounds, and which has a tendency to increase that separation of the sexes, perhaps at length to an Asiatic degree. If these ideas should extend, the consequences would be ruinous to Europe. Among the least pernicious of them would probably be that of bestowing a still greater proportion of pains on what

is called the minds of youth, to the utter neglect of many graceful and manly exercises, useful and ornamental abilities, which used to be acquired with a view to please each other. Their heads would then be more unmercifully stuffed with theories and speculations, without practice or application to any thing useful; and their hearts, or moral part, would then be left to chance, and to the company of their own sex, with full liberty to make very great savages of one another.

In your higher ranks, I fear it is often from not having been taught any useful knowledge in their youth, that we have seen so many country gentlemen, and others, neglect the studies of their early years, because they furnish neither amusement nor utility in the common affairs of their lives. And among your lower classes, it is still a greater shame and pity to find education so defective, and your police in many things so wretched; and to see, in nations and governments, so far inferior to yours, the miserable inhabitants appearing

ing so much more polished, civilized, and conversible, than your free-born Englishmen.

In your happy government, where no one is confined to the rank in which he was born, a free scope is given to the genius and industry of all, to better their condition, and proportionally to rise in importance; you, therefore, owe to each, an education equal at least to his intended rank and condition, and perhaps to that of the next above him: for numbers among you are daily rising, by their wealth, into stations and offices in life for which they are found to be totally unprepared and unfit, and are thereby worse than lost to the community. This may be a cause of more people appearing to be misplaced, *chez vous*, in office or dignity, than in countries where merit is not so professedly attended to. Occasions may arise with people in office so very improperly placed, as to be the ruin of the nation. If it is meant to keep the people ignorant from policy, I am pretty sure it is false policy, and *tout calcul fait*, you will



find that the want of education is a loss of power, and a great hindrance to the advances of a nation in all the arts, besides the injury done to morals, manners, and civilization. We have never found the Scotch to be worse, but certainly better qualified for most things, for having so generally received some education in their youth: their common people are therefore more temperate, frugal, and better behaved,—confessedly of a moral character superior to the people of the southern and richer provinces. This is well known both in the land and sea service.

By good education, I mean virtuous habits and useful knowledge, at least that is the best general definition that I can think of at present. No rank in society should remain without some share of these, such as is suited to their condition. Why should not even the lowest ranks learn writing, and some of the uses of numbers, and many of them some geometry and mechanics in a practical way? By the labour of learning these,—by the very act  
of

of going regularly to school, together with some proper and practical moral instruction there; we know that excellent effects may be produced, and that the important habits of regularity and application, obedience and œconomy, may in this way be given to the people, in short, a moral character superior to that of your present lower classes.

There are not probably any where so many liberal and public-spirited gentlemen as in your island; and yet I fear, throughout the country, the supply is not equal to the demand; and in most public departments, there is too obvious a want of useful and scientific knowledge, as well as among your tradesmen and country squires, which is indeed becoming almost proverbial, now that you are, it is hoped, ceasing to deserve the imputation.

The vulgarity and ignorance which we have too often seen a great deal too high in office—I am ashamed to think how high; in short, the deficiencies in our education,

I fear are yet such as may long keep the nation down, far beneath its natural place and estimation in the scale of Europe and of the world. When foreigners see these things, they are astonished at our superiority, unacquainted with the powers of our constitution: that constitution not having yet produced a better education for all ranks, I cannot well account for. If we had more men of science, we should be more ashamed to shew to those of our neighbouring nations the manifest ignorance and neglect to be seen around our extensive and important coasts.

I think I have observed, that the kind of knowledge in which the people, and even the gentlemen throughout England, are the most deficient, is the mathematical,—still more than in either the natural or moral kinds: many of them seem to acquire some tolerable notions of agriculture, of law and government, of commerce; but in most of the subjects where mathematics are concerned; as, canals, roads, rivers, sea-ports, embankings, piers, harbours, mines, build-

buildings, weights, measures, mills, machines, manufactories, pneumatics, hydraulics, in examinations, &c. in these you may often see country justices, and country gentlemen, deceived or led into absurdities by the most illiterate tradesman, over whom, a small tincture of mathematical knowledge at school or college might have given them a decided superiority, a beneficial control and direction. If our good fortune should ever bring a man of science to be a minister, with sufficient powers, he will probably shew us our ignorance in his improvements; he will find means to oblige various establishments and corporate bodies to do their duty at least, and establish others if necessary; and will make them consult and employ men of science when obviously requisite: such as your Trinity House,—commissioners of sewers,—those for draining Lincolnshire,—the corporations of London, and of most of the sea-ports and maritime counties.

In the general spirit of improvement, that of education must surely follow in

time. More useful knowledge, we may hope, will in future be taught at your universities, as these have already begun, and will, in some measure, be as it were forced to go on, and conform to the advances of the times, and teach what is most wanted in society, in spite of the fixedness, indolence, and monkery of their institution. Since they have condescended to study our laws, may not we hope that a knowledge of commerce and manufactures, of experimental philosophy and chemistry, may be gradually introduced there? the mathematical and mechanical sciences directed towards practice and utility; together with some taste and practice in the fine arts \*?

\* It is with pleasure we observe, that since, and even before, the above was written, our universities have adopted many of these improvements, especially Cambridge; and it is hoped they will go on improving: there is no stationary degree of perfection for any thing in this world. A few more of such superiors as we have lately seen, and a little more application in our young men of fashion, would soon make our universities, and our nation, by far the first in the world; and would shew us, that something solid, modern, and useful, may yet be built upon the old foundations. It is, however, to be wished that new establishments for universal learning were oftner attempted: new discoveries, a natural emulation, would be of service to the whole.

And



And let us hope, that your day schools, perhaps the most important of all, will be improved and increased ; and your boarding schools discouraged and diminished, perhaps by some heavy tax, or other means. Those literary and reading societies likewise, in your country towns, may inspire some learned ambition, some desire of knowledge, and do much good. Then your women might be of signal service in the day schools, and in almost every branch of early education. Nor can I see any objection to those females who shew strong symptoms of genius, and clearness of understanding, being permitted to go on in useful learning ; and some of them might, at length, teach the sciences, give popular lectures, and even fill a professor's chair with as much success, grace, and propriety, as any of us, as has been already practised in Italy. You would soon see an increasing demand for female tutors in families, if such could once be found sufficiently qualified. These may be considered as some preliminary reflections, till I can examine farther into the merits of education in this country.

## L E T T E R XIX.

*Of Language.—Of the French,—its Influence.—Of Musical Language.*

I LIKE the idea which you mention, of some late writers judging of the civilization of a people by their language, and from a vocabulary of its terms determining their advances in arts and knowledge. I have thought we could likewise judge of their taste by similar means, and from the choice and composition of the sounds in which they have chosen to express themselves, we might guess at their talents, and their taste in general, and more particularly in language, in music, and in all the objects of hearing; for these are all curiously, though often almost imperceptibly, linked to each other, and form but one connected chain of kindred powers and perceptions.

I

From

From this I am inclined to think, that they must have had a fine taste, a just sensibility, or *tatto fino e forte*, who framed the Italian language; and those who formed the French, a very bad one—a kind of false delicacy which led them to prefer such combinations of sounds and articulations, as are contrary to the real principles and mechanical means of full and fine expression, and as tend to form such positions and habits of the organs as contract and debilitate them, instead of assisting and fortifying their exertions. The organs of speaking and of hearing, being connected by nature, are, I think, both spoiled by the French language: from this habitual false standard proceeds a depraved taste, which prevents their judging rightly of eloquence, poetry, music, and of all those species of beauties, and in short, of all the objects of these two faculties at least: accordingly, I think we actually find that the French people are the most deficient of any nation we know, in learning to speak other languages; and we may therefore presume that they cannot properly judge  
of

of their beauties or defects. Thus, in one leading error or defect, we often discover the fertile source of many more: and, besides the natural connection of the powers and objects of taste, the arts, we know, cannot well advance but a-breast, if you will excuse a military term: so that it is difficult to conceive, how those who have gone originally wrong in several of them, can be great in any: and if we take into the account, a deficiency of perception in some of the finer and simple beauties of nature, the source of all the rest; and if we thence deduce their passion for the artificial kinds,—for things where the labour and the artist appear,—for glass, gilding, glitter,—for violent and superfluous colouring and carving; we must allow them merit for not going farther wrong: and we cannot help regretting, that they have so much to overcome before they can begin to make a right progress. We know, however, that some of this nation have overcome almost all of those difficulties and impediments, which must doubtless have cost them great pains, trouble, and travel: I have known several  
who

who have bestowed great labour on the pronunciation and speaking of other languages, and with less success than you can well imagine.

You will readily conceive, that in speaking of national character, one means only that which is most commonly to be met with in that nation, and which is always subject to numerous exceptions. We are, perhaps, too ready to reason on general ideas, and lay down principles in almost every subject, and thence go often wrong by rule. We all know, as you observe, that there have been many men and women also of this country, who have shewn the most elegant and classical taste in many things; and some who have excelled in almost all the arts,—if we except those in which, from being insensibly incapacitated by their native language, they are infallibly destined to labour in vain; and this deficiency reaches farther than you may at first conceive;—so far as to surprise you when you come to examine it.

In



In many ways the French shew great vivacity and quickness of parts, and sometimes even shining abilities, although their style of performance in all the arts may be faulty: their amateurs in music, for example, are generally greater performers than ours, though their style and manner of playing is yet more vicious: their violent and sudden jerks and transitions,—those extremes of forte and piano which are no longer musical sounds, the one being only a whisper, and the other a noise;—their inattention to tone, and hence the general badness of their instruments, and still more their voices;—their rising and sinking so far, and so suddenly, from all the fury of passion to the silence of death or stupidity: these are certainly not within the line of beauty. Our taste and execution tend towards the other extreme of the tame, heavy, and insipid. Of the two extremes, I should perhaps prefer their fire and spirit, with all its vicious violence, to our sleepy though sentimental languor, could they but keep their violence within any bounds: but it seems in this case, as if it were easier for

us to add than for them to take away, and better to fall short than overshoot the mark. By attending more to the Italians, our performers, though less numerous and less powerful, certainly do improve in taste, while they continue in the same wild extreme; and when you are not deficient in spirit and expression, you are probably now getting before them in the chief requisites of instrumental performance, though still inferior in force and execution; nor are you yet so far superior to them in singing as you seem to fancy; and I think you are not sufficiently sensible of your numerous vocal deficiencies, nor of many other attendant national vulgarisms; and consequently, you are not in the way to get rid of them.

In most opinions, except perhaps our own, both the French and we are certainly wretched singers, and below criticism: let us then attend to the Italians. If we might venture to criticise their productions, we might observe that even they sometimes go a little astray: from a fertile fancy, and love of novelty,

novelty, amidst their endeavours to please all parties and all nations, we may expect to find them, at times, transgressing their own maxims, and sacrificing a principle to an accessory,—real beauty to trifling ornament; and in compliance to the times, preferring the caprices of execution to the essentials of expression; running into a style which a Roman audience will call *tropo trito et ornato*. And till some other Metastasio appear, their little poetasters may often be wrong in their musical language, and may not always distinguish between what should be said and what should be sung,—between the words fit for *aria*, and those for *recitativo*; though these, with their affections of the mind, are as different as smoke and flame; and the change from one to the other somewhat resembling that transition of nature, as far as such different objects can resemble. The attempts of the French to run these gradually into each other, like several of their refined absurdities, only serves to shew their want of musical feeling and judgment.

Gracing

Gracing recitative appears absurd, and yet in the first operas, it seems, it was still more ornamented, and had frequent formal closes: that style seems to be returning. But we may trust the Italians to their own feelings, which will not probably suffer them to wander far, nor long, from truth and nature: and we must leave the French to go wrong their own way, which they will most likely always do.

This of musical language is a subject that would require some farther critical attention, if that attention could be of any service to it. Since the time of the Greeks, I think it has been attended to only by the Italians, and by them rather felt than understood; it may cease to be so, like many other things, when we come to analyse it. As the age of strong passions and great actions is antecedent to that of reason and scientific researches, the greatest things are performed before we know well how, or can trace the rules or motives; and when we come to examine too closely into the causes of our pleasure, I fear it often vanishes in the investigation.



Musical was probably more felt when less scientific and refined. We have been very long in discovering that we have no musical language except the Italian, and that is only partly musical: hence the world is not yet cured of the vulgar notion, that any words may be sung, if they are only made to rhyme: whereas, it is certainly first the passion or sentiment expressed, and not the rhyme nor cadence, that renders serious words fit to be sung; then the construction and arrangement of the sounds and articulations of those words, become next of consequence in musical language. I fear it is hardly possible to produce the proper and powerful voice of passion or sentiment upon any of that numerous class of English words ending with a dead dumb consonant. We could as easily run full speed against a wall.

It may be chiefly owing to this formation of our language, and to the difficulty of producing and exercising the voice in singing it, that we have had so few good voices, so little vocal expression, and so



defective a taste, or feeling, of music in general: and now that we begin to be a little improved by the Italians, our judgment is still variable and unsure; in deliberating whether we should follow them or not, we are left behind, and often keep admiring as new what is out of date, and far surpassed in other countries. In like manner, the defects of voice, taste, and manner, so conspicuous in this nation, might be deduced from their language, though in a different way, as its musical deficiencies are different. But I wish not to tire you with disquisitions which, without such minutiae, you may probably think too long before I have done. For the language and the music of this country, you see, are leading me into a multitude of general reflections on these two subjects: from them I shall go on to pick out what may appear to me the most new and important, instead of the usual travelling particulars concerning a country already so well known.

## L E T T E R XX.

*Of speaking Languages.—Of Style.*

THOUGH sensible of the singularity of some of these opinions, on the French, on languages, on music, and doubtful of my own judgment, yet, on the maturest deliberation, I do not find that I can abate much even of the most singular: we may be too cautious, and thereby destroy all energy of thought, and I am perhaps too apt to doubt from anxiety not to misrepresent; but owing to that very anxiety some degree of misrepresentation is perhaps unavoidable: from a solicitude to give a striking likeness, we cannot always avoid overcharging some of the features.

I have here been labouring hard to speak the French *comme il faut*, afraid that some prejudice or dislike might arise in me from a want of sufficient practice and intercourse, which I believe may often happen:

happen : we find the people of most countries become more agreeable to us as we grow into their friendship and acquaintance. But I doubt being ever able now to pronounce and speak the French with the current volubility of a native, unless it be on some chosen and premeditated subjects. I have had the satisfaction of being taken for an Italian in Italy, and for a Spaniard in Spain (a very rare thing for a stranger), but I suppose I may never be able to pass here for more than a Swiss.

The speaking languages well depends not quite so much, I think, on a particular turn or genius for it, as many suppose, but more on early pains and habits ; and in adults, on additional labour and study, and on observing narrowly, both by the eye and the ear, the motion, manner, and posture of the mouths of the natives : much will likewise depend on the nature of our own original language, as before observed, on the position and strength it may previously have given to certain organs : so that we find some nations learn

languages much easier than others,—as the Irish, Scotch, Moors, &c.—the French and English the worst of all. The French are certainly the most confined and capricious of us all in their alphabetical habits and ideas, in their notions of orthography, and I believe in every thing where sounds are concerned : you know, in geography, they have totally spoiled the names of places, *que no les conociera la madre que les parió* : for these and many other reasons, it is much to be lamented that their language should take the lead in Europe.

I think I can perceive some powerful effects of language on the physiognomy, and can thence trace one of the causes of nationality of face : this might be a curious speculation to pursue ; but I know not how it could be well expressed in writing. You must not yet tire of these digressive and desultory lectures, which you get so often instead of travels ; I shall perhaps return again and again to the same subjects, as they may, in passing through different countries, be forced on the mind : this of  
language



language and sounds seems to run into a string of reflections which might be stretched to any length, especially if we extend it so as to take in music.

I think I understand and like your observations on Blair and on style, but I apprehend that, in communicating our ideas, we shall discover between us some differences in taste, as usual with those who venture to think for themselves. Accustomed to read for information more than for pleasure, I have attended little to style or manner, and have therefore, perhaps, inadequate ideas of its beauties and importance: certainly to handle the tools, and feel the difficulties of an art, must enable us to judge better of the merits of the performance, provided we are always aware of the error of estimating the difficulties of execution too highly; an error to which professors have been supposed sometimes subject. Some observations, however, have occurred to me on attending to yours; you will tell me if you think them just: our opinions may be of more service to

A a 4

each



each other for the very reason that they differ.

If we English should be led into a taste for too much ornament in writing or speaking, I think we should have less excuse for ourselves than some other nations. Our plain, rational, and monosyllabic tongue, seems to me, neither made for music, nor for those flowery and sonorous beauties which, in some other languages, charm and run away with us by the ear. Our language, clear, distinct, and precise, speaks only to the understanding; it cares not much about the beauties of sound, nor waits to attend to them. In attempting a lengthened latinity of phrase, or a constant rounding of periods with measured sets of sonorous terms, in soaring to magnificence and amplification, we presently get into the regions of affectation, where we are quite out of our element, and make a very awkward figure. In the short nervous style, where powerful brevity prevails, I conceive that both the beauties and expression of our language consist: content with the  
few

few graces that lie in its way, and not deigning to look aside for the flowery paths that lead round, by tedious and uncertain ways, to the object already in view, it goes beyond most other languages in force and rapidity; reaches its object sooner, and strikes it more forcibly. If, in aiming at brevity, we sometimes appear abrupt and obscure, it is more excusable than the other extreme of the flowery, declamatory, or diffuse.

Every language has its particular turn or genius. I know not if any one has remarked these, or the following particulars, of ours: in the pronunciation, it seems to incline to a certain distinct pausing precision, by its strong and frequent articulations, as if attending only to perspicuity or demonstration; and without a particular attention to a choice of words, mostly of foreign extraction, it does not run current-ly, or with facility, through the mouth: but when that attention is discovered, it strikes with an idea of affectation, against every species of which I think we have,  
after

after a certain degree of cultivation, a natural dislike more than any other nation I know. Whereas, in the Spanish and Italian languages, the voice dwells with pleasure on most of their sounds, and the tongue rebounds upon every articulation with a rapidity and elasticity which exercises and strengthens its powers: but of this, unfortunately, very few of our English or French mouths can ever be sensible, as both our languages and our organs have been over-refined, contracted, and debilitated,—probably from the silly affectation of people with bad ears, and false taste, trying to speak pretty. I must think that most of our flowery writers and speakers will offend the nice and natural ear much more by their affectation, than they can ever please it by all the beauties they can thus exhibit: while our plain and simple brevity,—our wit and humour,—our simple and truly sublime, which rises by stealth into sentiment independent of the wings of sound, and where more is meant than meets the ear; these will always be justly admired: as we rise into the florid, we soon

soon become ridiculous; sacrificing sense to sound in a waste of ineffectual ornaments.

You ought to be the Spartans of Europe, —the patterns of a manly and laconic style of eloquence; and if you would but *tant soit peu*, support that character, the surrounding nations are rather inclined to grant it you: you would then stand high and alone; but if you mistake your object, and take the contrary road, through a flowery verbosity, you will find all the higher places occupied; you will be outdone in those walks by many, who will look down upon you as weak competitors, and laugh at the unnatural efforts of such awkward imitators.

The expression of our language necessarily depends more on emphasis than on accent, of which last we have now no rule or idea that can be measured or applied, and of which we therefore wisely make a very moderate and arbitrary use; and the emphasis, when carried to a vulgar extreme, offends the ear, and swallows up the unem-



unemphatic parts. Much of Garrick's merit as a speaker, consisted in properly moderating and concealing it, as the best French players do with that barbarous invention of rhyme; he turned emphasis into sound. From this might likewise, perhaps, be deduced much of our false taste in singing, and thence generally in music; for English singing is as much too emphatic as the speaking. By carrying this violent degree of emphasis into song, we support the false idea, of music or singing being an exaggerated kind of speech or poetry; and those emphatic parts of our songs, and still more of our boisterous and bellowing choruses, often cover and conceal all the rest, and come to our ears, not in the shape of sounds, but as blows sufficient to split our heads.

Our pronunciation has been so over-refined by false delicacy and affectation, that we have probably now lost much of the relish for that brief and expressive energy which is the *fort* of our language. We have banished the powerful guttural sounds  
which,



which, in the Spanish, and some other languages, seem to double the force and extent of the organs of speech : the nations of most taste and feeling have retained those sounds ; as the Arabians, the Spanish, the Scotch, Tuscans, &c. : a third species of articulation, and the most expressive, is thus added to the other two : those three species are the labial, the palatal, and the guttural. The *r* seems likewise to be in some danger of losing its force and powers in the over-refined and minced mode of speaking, of fashion and affectation.

I am glad to see you affect and approve of brevity and simplicity ; I think them essential in your poetry and the true sublime, and indispensable in our language. Study and acquire a facility of style and composition by all means, but not the art of spinning out a little matter into a long story, or a great book ; that is beneath the dignity of a language whose force consists in its good sense and precision : your words should be all weight and substance,—full measure pressed together, and running over, in a redundancy  
of

of sense, but not of sound: examples enough might be found to prove this doctrine. In your favourite Gibbon, I think you will find his best phrases are the brief and laconic,—those that are most like Tacitus; but I suspect that the long and laboured periods, of which he is probably the proudest, will least stand the test of time and good taste. The most powerful parts of Lord Chatlam's eloquence were those compressed into the very essence of brevity; when he said, "I rejoice that America  
"resists," what a previous march and energy of thought was there expressed! We can astonish by the short and forcible ways of hitting our object, but not by overwhelming it in a torrent of words, unless it be by the suddenness and velocity, more than by the quantity, of that torrent; but even there, beware of false fire and false torrents. I know of but few, besides your Dean Swift, who have had taste enough to despise those tinsel beauties of conceit and affectation in our language.

Let

Let us not be led too far out of our way neither by the false glare of those fanciful fellows the poets:—but I can excuse you young men being a little caught, at first, by the tinsel of our flourishers and versifiers; it is a fire that will cool by time and a maturer refinement. I think we have hardly had a poet, since Shakespear and Milton, of a mind sufficiently universal; nor a speaker of real taste, except Garrick, to shew us how much we should attend to sense, and how much to sound: I believe, we shall seldom find any of those three sacrificing the former to the latter. We must not look for the force nor for the few beauties of our language, in the sickly fancy of modern refinement, that culls the few soft and affected phrases, and shrinks from the old, rough, manly, and most powerful terms,—nor in the fashionable conversation, or mincing jargon of the day, among the people who are reputed *genteel*. I think I have known some country, or pastoral, people, who have a better taste in poetry, music, and song, than those of great towns; there, I think the vulgarities are insupportable;

able; whereas those of the country have often something of the rural or antiquated, that renders the most ignorant agreeable. In great towns, the lower classes have either no taste, or worse than none; and the higher refine without feeling. Your cockneys, I believe, contribute largely towards spoiling both your language and your taste.

## L E T T E R XXI.

*On Music.*

To Mrs. P——.

I AM now going to take your advice, and try to recollect such of my observations on music as may have a chance of being new or singular, and in the order they may occur to a memory which you know to be none of the best. The vast variety of sounds, their formation, qualities, and effects, seem not to have been yet sufficiently attended to, perhaps because not of sufficient importance. But you see I know not well how, or where, to begin, without appearing too general and systematic; and I do not mean to write a formal treatise: we men are ever attempting to generalize ideas too much, and embroiling with scientific ratiocination the simplest things. Some Frenchman observes, “ *que trop de raisonnement étouffe le sentiment ; il faudroit le laisser a ceux qui ne* ”

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*sont des hommes que par la tête.*" You ladies could give us very good lessons in these matters; with a little more education, many of you would render learning more agreeable and less pedantic, and would be sufficiently compressed and laconic in your reasoning, with all the advantages of a finer taste and a truer sensibility, a juster sense of simplicity, affectation, and of all the human qualities, you might be still of more service to us.

But I meant to say something more of the sounds, or component parts of language: I think they have not yet been well arranged, nor understood; I doubt that which was understood by the Greeks is now mostly lost to us. Some of the Italian grammarians and musicians, as a Buomattei, Martini, Tartini, &c. have made another beginning on these subjects of sounds, language, music; and the Italians are most likely to succeed in pursuing them.

Alpha-

Alphabetical writing was doubtless a wonderful and important discovery. Its greatest merit, I think, was that of distinguishing sounds from articulations, a degree of perfection to which the eastern languages have not yet arrived; and that defect may be, with those nations, one of the chief causes of their limited progress in many other things. You know they have no vowels, except some that have the *a*, but always joined to some articulation: their attempts to supply that defect by points, give them but very imperfect and indistinct ideas of vocal and articulate sounds, and of their important distinction. But even languages the most alphabetical, if the expression may be allowed, could not probably transmit, by writing, a complete idea of their own sounds and pronunciation from any one age or people to another. Sounds are to us infinite and variable, and we cannot transmit by one sense the ideas and objects of another. We shall be convinced of this, when we recollect the innumerable qualities of tone in human voices, so as to enable us to distinguish all

our acquaintances, though the number should amount to many hundreds, or perhaps thousands. With attention, we might discover a different quality of tone in every instrument; for all these there never can be a sufficient number of adequate terms in any written language: and when that variety comes to be compounded with a like variety of articulation, it becomes infinite to us. The varieties only upon the seven notes in music, varied only as to pitch and modulation throughout the audible scale, combined with those of time, are not yet probably half exhausted by the constant labour of so many ages. So that the idea of Mr. Steel, and others, of representing to the eye the tune and time only of the sounds in any language, will probably ever prove inadequate to the end proposed, even without attempting the kinds and qualities of tones and articulations, which would render it infinite and quite impossible.

The division of the sounds of language into *accent*, *quantity*, *emphasis*, has plainly proved insufficient to mark or measure  
those

those ideas intelligibly. Some mode of dividing all sounds, comprehending those of language, into *tune, time, tone, and articulation*, seems possible: and some of them might be expressed on an instrument, but not the whole. Emphasis seems incapable of being measured or transmitted. Noise and sound seem to belong to different genera. So that there appears to be a real distinction between *noise, sound, and music*; and though these three distinct genera decline, or shade off into each other, yet they cannot well be confounded by a just or musical ear; but it seems to me, that in France and England they often confound them all.

The complete generic difference between some sounds and music, as between singing and speaking, has certainly been overlooked: these two species of *voci* should be expressed by different terms: words, when sung, should be called by some other name. It seems doubtful if speaking in the modern languages can belong even to the class of sounds, much less to that of music. The idea and expression of musical beauties



in language, is now merely figurative: we might almost as properly call them white or black, as musical. The moment any noise becomes a sound, or a sound becomes musical, it is transformed in its nature, and into a different class, and should no longer retain the same name: and if we had terms enough, none of those technically used for one class would apply to another. Nothing shews more clearly the insufficiency of language, than different subjects borrowing so many terms from each other: it may be the source of some figures and beauties of speech, but not of precision or of scientific improvement. I only pretend to give hints: terms and arrangements seem yet wanting in these subjects. The Italians should here investigate, and we should follow them.

In order to understand this generic difference between musical sounds and all others, we must attend to the mind, when musically employed or disposed by music itself: in that disposition or affection, the chief circumstance to be noticed seems to be the power  
given



given to the mind, by means of music, at once to dwell on the object of its passion, and to express that passion with ease and pleasure by means of this new medium: whereas, by words, or common language, the mind seems disposed to vent or get rid of its feelings; or the rapid succession of ideas leaves not time for the deep impression of any one in particular; hence the great passions feel a kind of contempt for mere words, and often prefer silence or action; the mind prefers music (if the passion is not too outrageous), in order to indulge in expressions at once sufficiently pleasant and durable. Words, producing their effects by successive and reiterated impressions, but which are only transient, and, as it were, remove each other, the result cannot be so much an accumulation of the whole, as when music is employed to bind all those instants together, and, by forming them all into one continued whole, produce effects proportioned to the prolonged duration of the favourite sentiment.

Between the least and greatest expression in music,—between simple recitation and the best expressions of extreme distress, of sorrow, rage, or despair,—the degrees are numerous, and seem to me far greater than between any one kind of language and another: yet this musical affection seems likewise disposed to smooth and equalize, as well as to continue the different sentiments expressed, and to bring the most violent passion down to a tone or temperament more pleasant and supportable; and seems, at the same time, to dignify or elevate lesser objects and sentiments up towards the same tone, so as to assimilate the whole of the sentiments and expression, and render them more temperate and elegant, though not less powerful: hence music has always been considered as proper to soften or tame the rugged and hurtful passions,—to temper and civilize the mind; and hence it cannot probably admit of the violent oratorical or theatrical modes of action and expression: sobbing, and tears, may perhaps be admissible in some kinds of declamation, but not in serious singing;  
and

and the absurdity of the French in attempting it, is very obvious to every body but themselves.

The meaning and limits of musical expressions not being very clear, distinct, or well defined, but shaded off, and running, as it were, out of sight, leave the fancy just what it wishes, the power of shaping them to its own affections; so that the music and the imagination go on, mutually assisting each other wonderfully well, till lost in the clouds of sublimity of their own creating. From these premises follow several consequences, more than I shall trouble you with.

From this equanimity and desire of continuance in the musical affection, we may deduce the dislike of violent change in the melody or modulation, in the time or movement, beyond a certain degree; these must correspond to the new equanimity of the passions, and now slower transitions of the mind. This is seldom sufficiently observed even by masters of great name; I think

think they are often either under or over the limits in modulation—length, variety, change ; and they thus too plainly discover that they do not always themselves feel what they seem to express.

From hence, and from what follows, may be deduced the reasons of our language being unfit for music, and of its injuring our musical abilities, and impeding the progress of the art. The number of ideas, and accuracy of the meaning, the wit, and habitual good sense, of the English language, are all unfit to be sung, especially when compressed into few words ; so that your best poetry is the least singable ; and there is no setting two of your excellent verses to music, without transgressing some of the above rules of nature : likewise, its sounds and articulations not being arranged for singing, the expression consisting mostly in the force of shortness, more like the strength of a blow than the power of sound, your poetry must be spoiled by being sung, and your forcible emphasis must lose its powers, when turned into lengthened and enfeebled

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sound,



found, with the powers of which you are not sufficiently acquainted nor exercised, nor probably ever can be, while impeded by an antimusical language, that cannot with propriety be sung. That angular kind of stiffness in French and English song, of which almost all their compositions partake, is thus probably owing to the languages.

The qualities of tone, which seem infinite, have great power in carrying various affections directly to the heart: indeed, the quality of tone seems to be the most essential part of the whole musical machinery that affects us, and yet it seems the least attended to by the French and English. Certain tones, and musical sentences, seem to be the original expressions of nature, and cannot be analysed or explained; and they might, perhaps, be made to supply still better the defects in the languages of convention.

Hence also, one air or piece should never be made to express more than one sentiment: there is a necessary unity of idea through-



throughout the same movement, and to break it is as great an offence against the taste or affection on the one hand, as the want of genius sufficient to fill up the limits of variety, which the mind in that state allows, is on the other. The favourite object or sentiment of a passion is of such importance in the musical piece, that different movements may be applied to express it, or dwell on it: but different sentiments being sung to the same music is generally absurd and incongruous. The old mode of ballads, or poems, where the words are the main object, and every verse is sung to the same tune, is poetry and not music; quite another species, as well as that of recitative, and of many comic expressions which depend on the jingle or rhythmical motion of the time.

Some of the ballad kind of music, I can conceive, might, even in modern language, be successfully applied to greater poetic works, which, accompanied by a large harp or lute, might be sung or recited in some kind of half-measured heroic air, or recitative, as was probably done by the ancients,  
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and attempted by some modern harpers or minstrels in various countries; and of which the present old Spanish romance may be some remains or imitation. A great master of his instrument, and of his subject, I can likewise conceive, might even make words and music both extemporary, and produce powerful effects from the warmth and greatness of his feelings, as we have seen successfully attempted in Spain and Italy. The modern serious Italian is a species differing from all these, and not at all connected with the words, with the rhyme, or the cadence of poetry: it is not the words, but the passion, which is here set to music. The relationship between music and verse, which we are still foolishly insisting on being sister arts, is here quite worn out: our music is now insulated and governed by laws of her own, and no longer grows out of our language. In the comic or lively, the music may express the measure or jingle of the verse, though not very closely, and she ought even there to take liberties of her own: but in the serious she moves with too much passion and dignity to follow the measure  
of

of verse, or any measures but her own; and the words or *voci* are obviously secondary. So that there seems to be growing up a specific difference between *song* and *aria*; in the first, the words being the main object, and the tune or music secondary; and in the *aria*, the contrary.

Words, when sung, as already observed, should be called by some other name (as *voci musicale* or *cantabile*), as they are then transformed into another class, with qualities entirely different, though not easy to define: they are converted from conventional signs of ideas, to be a part of the most original expressions of nature and of passion, and affect us no longer as words, but as part of the music,—a part that helps to direct the mind towards the object or meaning of the melody, but not too direct and precisely; they may help to give vent to the passion, but not to explain or define it; that, when necessary, is the office of recitative, as well as that of carrying on the action or story. We shall very seldom find Metastasio guilty of the absurdity of *singing events*, or a story, in the laboured melody  
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of *aria*, which must be reserved for the language of passion or sentiment.

The musical philosopher would soon perceive the necessity of some musical language being constructed on purpose, if the Italian were not already made to his hand; its *voci* are tolerably constructed both as to force and beauty—the sounds and articulations of the right kind, and so combinable as to favour both the forcible and the beautiful modes of musical expression, and to maintain that continued and flowing desire which keeps moving unbroken within certain limits or lines of beauty; not in sharp angles, or cut into pieces, like the music of most other nations. Their words, or *voci*, do not, like ours, stop the musical voice, but help to bring it forth, and produce that fulness and length of sound, supported on strong and well placed articulations, which, like steps, bear up, and carry on the voice, make it rebound, and keep the mind, as it were, suspended or floating in that kind of pleasure which forms the chief part of what I call the musical affection. But I believe it is impossible to explain these things in words, and I do not expect to be well understood,



derstood, nor is it perhaps very necessary that I should attempt it; our friend Dr. Burney will make these things plainer to you, and I flatter myself he will generally be found of my opinion; my not being of his would make me doubt or retract.

In music there are probably some certain principles of beauty in which almost all nations would agree, if we could, in society, preserve our native feelings to judge of them: but those feelings, altered and weakened by civilization, are perhaps no longer equal to the task; our feelings subside even while we write about them, and as we attempt to define, they evaporate. We know they are subject to the powers of habit, or second nature, for we see different nations love very different sorts of music, and I have seen some who love none. We may now be so far beneath the feelings and enthusiasm of former times, as to have hardly enough remaining to judge of theirs, or to form theories and speculations on these subjects: and in these writing and civilized ages, theory seems to be our *fort*, and our greatest pleasure, and if  
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we miss that, we shall have little else remaining. Such appears to be the progress of society: in some of its earlier stages, with higher sentiments and powers of exertion, men do great things for their more enlightened posterity to write and talk about; and these two different employments suit the two different periods and characters: the pleasure of the one consisting in action, and of the other in knowledge. By the time we have settled a good theory of music, and of musical sentiment (if ever we do), perhaps the musical age will be over, if it is not over already. The critics came after Homer, who made poetry and rules all at once. Genius and judgment, when joined, seem but one sentiment; and the first feeling or judgment of real genius is perhaps more infallible than that of the most laborious reasoning.

The heroic, poetic, and musical ages, probably come together, or in succession, producing each other, and before that of

higher civilization, which dispels the others. The people of Paris and of London have, I think, the worst taste in music of any people in Europe.

We have learned from our masters the Italians, that the first merit of any music consists much in its near resemblance to that of the human voice: but hardly any of us, besides the Italians, have any voices worth imitating, except the little we sometimes learn from them: they are readily admitted not only to the second, but to the first place, by all those nations who have shewn the best taste, and have produced the best music: it was reserved for the French, and some of the English (neither of whom have shewn much good taste, nor good music), to dispute the superiority with the Italians: but it is the ass in the lion's skin; they stand alone, and only themselves could ever think of comparing their heavy and vulgar compositions with the elegant and powerful productions of that refined people. Who ever heard of a grand  
French

French opera out of France, or a Handel's oratorio out of England \* ?

After the Italians, the Spaniards, perhaps the next in music, have kept up the best national taste for some time ; and are likewise next to them in singing, which they do naturally and delicately, and which is perhaps chiefly owing likewise to their language : but they too, admirers of the Italian style, will probably adopt it so heartily as to lose their own, which is perhaps the national music most to be regretted in the general loss. All who are acquainted with the *seguidilla* and *zarzuela*, would gladly hope, that their singular, ingenious, and expressive delicacy might preserve them from the general ruin which, from Italy, now threatens the music of all other nations.

Instrumental music advances, I think, apace, while that of song, the source of all,

\* The Germans having lately tried some of their countryman Handel's oratorical pieces, will not, I believe, be a sufficient recommendation to the rest of the world, nor ever be the means of carrying them into Italy.

stands still, or, what is worse, runs wild. Though the best parts of instrumental music may be those that are said to sing, and their first and most indispensable merit is their near imitation of the human voice, yet each instrument has a peculiar style of execution, and kind of music of its own; and the performers in those paths produce many beauties foreign to song, though necessarily mixed with it: besides, a natural desire for variety and novelty, a necessary relief for song itself, all require that instrumental music must not always be singing; as it cannot raise the musical affection in the mind so easily, nor to so high a pitch, as song, it must have recourse to the variety of execution, of movement, modulation, melody, in order to command and surprise the attention. But let us pray that this kind of music may pass only for what it is worth: voices imitating instruments is certainly a false taste, and let us hope that the world *en reviendra*.

I confess I love to see genius take liberties within certain wide bounds, and transgress

gress now and then some established rules; several of which become so tiresome in the dull routine of constant use, especially in the hands of the French and English, where there is so little real musical genius and variety. Music has, at times, been shackled with various pedantic rules, which have been afterwards broken and removed by some of those original and friendly geniuses that now and then arise to set us free again: these Frenchmen want to shackle it still more, and insist on the composer and singer attending to the accent and quantity of their prosaic and antimusical language. The French had their present style of music from Italy by means of Lully and Rameau, and the English by Handel; but they both now absurdly attempt to refuse following their masters the Italians, when they deserve it more; and they are left behind, to stand alone, and render their defects in musical taste the more conspicuous. There can be no one exclusive style of beauty in music; variety becomes necessary to those who can relish all its beauties: each kind has



its degree of merit ; ignorance and bad taste discover themselves by misplacing those degrees, and by preferring mediocrity to excellence, or the worst to the best.

But, in short, music is an affair of sentiment, and the only question is, Do you like it ? Still more of the rules and habits of modern composition will probably be considered, one day, as pedantic nonsense. And let us hope the times may return, when great masters, with warm and cultivated minds, will compose, from their own feelings, more than by any of the mechanical rules of their art. A Sacchini, Boccherini, Haydn, and some others, have shewn them the way, nor have they gone so far as to give cause to despair going beyond them, as has been supposed of Newton or Raphael : the best music furnishes the most hints for imitation, and the most original ideas, in others : if those great geniuses cannot be surpassed in their own walks, new paths may be discovered by that very enthusiasm with  
which

which they inspire us: so that the most musical nations and ages must be the least stationary, the most prolific and changeable in their taste and productions: it is only the common people who for ever can relish only the same tunes and songs; and nothing shews more strongly, in a nation, the want of musical progress, or of the true feelings and knowledge in the art, than the vulgarity of annually repeating, and dwelling eternally on, the same pieces of music, and more especially if those pieces are such as no nation can like but themselves.

We have had a Purcel, and the Scotch have shewn some musical sentiment by their songs, or national melodies: but then some think it was more generally taught at our common schools, and country choirs were well filled, and vied with each other in taste and performance. A continuance of these excellent customs might have produced a succession of Purcels, which, indeed, is absolutely necessary to the pro-

gress of the art : such a progression might, by this time, have worn away many difficulties and impediments : but our language, and our voices, though both might be improved, will long, I fear, keep our national taste below mediocrity, and doomed to follow the Italians at a great distance. However, by liberally encouraging them as they deserve, the art may flourish with you, even more than in any other capital in Europe : but where it has ceased being taught at common schools, where that muse is not born and bred, and does not proceed spontaneously from the genius and manners of the people, nor grow out of their language, she may be invited over and nursed up as the slave of luxury, and may administer some feeble pleasures to the exhausted feelings of the great ; but her native vigour and abilities will not appear in such countries, nor can much of the natural influence of her art be thus forced downwards, beginning, as it were, at the wrong end.

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Hence the musical judgment, or sensibility of your audience, will probably be always somewhat low and defective, and the encoring of *Roast Beef*, or of some little popular *rondo*, or vulgar ballad, will long continue to shew the extent of their taste and knowledge: they seem to judge of song and melody by some standard of the lowest vulgarity, taken from the alehouse or Vauxhall, or at best from some old-fashioned instrumental execution, or sometimes from their heavy drawling church style. And even among your most improved and cultivated ears, how few are yet found capable of feeling the merits of the true Italian song, tone, and melody? And of your singers, still fewer I fear, will ever be able to express those, or deliver the *voci* of that elegant language in song, or any thing like the nature and character of its *cantabile* expressions.

In their mode of singing and expressing the Italian, it is presently perceptible that they are at best only mimicking, like parrots, the expressions of another, and that  
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they are neither thinking, nor feeling, in that language, nor know any thing of the passion they are singing about, and are only trying to recollect the lessons of the master. And even the talent of mimicking, instead of feeling those expressions, cannot, I believe, be well acquired without going to Italy while young.

A very different taste and degree of skill and judgment are observable in the people or audience at Rome, and even a little difference and improvement already at Edinburgh.

As to your English and French operas, or your comedies hashed up with songs, I have gradually brought myself to feel them almost all insupportable, and to think them incompatible with the principles and effects of modern music. Both languages are totally unfit for recitative, and thereby exclude all successful attempts at serious opera: the other, or comic kind, is not often much better: the transition from speech to song, and still more from song to speech,



speech, is too violent even in joke or fun, and is not long to be borne by any but French or English ears. If the author were a good musician, he might contrive, with cautious art, like Shakespear, to introduce, without offence, some singing; but then it should always terminate the scene, and with an exit.

All music might be divided into popular and learned, though they are generally mixed, and neither species is found pure, or by itself: the taste, even of the lowest people, by slow degrees, may be perceived to advance a little into the learned. It might be curious to trace the gradual progress of our taste, or desire for variety and new ideas, by long practice, from the most simple to the most varied melody, up through all the varieties of discord, complication, contrivance. This progress is absolutely necessary and natural in music, whatever it may be in the other arts: though it may require to be confined in its progress within certain wide rules or limits; yet there is  
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in music no stationary point of perfection where it ought to stop, as in the other arts. I believe it may be because music is more natural to us, and through habit, soon becomes a kind of extemporaneous expression, or pleasurable effusion of the mind, which is not subject to, nor worth the labour of being tied up by, many rules and regulations, nor of being stopped at any supposed point of excellence.

Those vulgar, social, or sentimental songs, and the manner of singing them, in France and England, without any accompaniment of other voice or instrument, may be considered as the lowest species of music,—if in that defective shape they can at all be classed as music. Since the discovery and use of harmony, these must appear to musicians as very defective, and all of them to require some accompaniment. We might as well insist upon going into company barefooted so long after shoes and stockings have been invented, as attempt to support that kind of singing, as music, so long after the system of harmony has been established :

established\*: but all the other higher classes of harmonic composition are made for the scientific and skilful in the art, and are certainly beyond the taste and comprehension of those who are not musicians: so that we cannot easily conceive how those two sets of people, the learned and unlearned in harmony, can now possibly associate musically; or why so many of the latter, of the uninitiated, come to disturb certain select musical parties with their company, to hear what they cannot understand, nor half relish, and where they can neither speak nor move without being wrong, and bringing secret distress on the musical members, and some degree of contempt upon themselves. Music is unlike the other arts in this, that there is no learning to judge without learning to perform; though the art seems natural and easy to every one who has an ear, yet the judg-

\* I speak of music as such.—The tunes of our dances, and even of many of our songs, can scarcely as yet be called music, unless when properly accompanied. We shall begin to perceive distinctions arising in these subjects, for which no names nor language are yet provided.

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ment of the unlearned is seldom, if ever, worth attending to. They ought at least to be silent, and never speak on the subject.

To have a good musical audience they must all be musicians; but this cannot yet be expected, till the *sol fa*, as we hope, be again commonly learned at school, and the *guitara*, or *lute*, as generally understood and used in company as a pack of cards; the former talent being much easier acquired, will certainly afford more pleasure than the latter. This degree of musical taste and talents might have been, and may yet be expected to arise among us, as a natural consequence of the modern improvements, and facility in harmony and methods of teaching, with the increasing abundance of fine music. Such is already pretty nearly the state of music in some parts of Spain and Portugal: most of the people there sing, play, and understand music, and with very little more teaching than such as is used in learning to walk, speak, or read. It is to be hoped, in the next generation, there will be more musicians, and that they will do something towards

wards bringing the art into more general use.

I think those single naked table songs are very properly wearing out of fashion, and will, I hope, remain so, till people learn to accompany themselves; so that little or no music will then remain for the unlearned, and people will be forced to become really musical, by learning the art, for all the reasons of self-defence and social pleasure.

I fear that native defects in some of the northern characters and languages, must have retarded the natural progress of music among them: nothing but some such circumstance, together with the great number of the ignorant keeping one another in countenance, could produce, or excuse the negligence, we might almost say, the stupidity of so many remaining unacquainted with so simple a thing as our *sol, fa*, or system of music, the source of so much pleasure. We are told, that in Russia music



has long begun to make some of its natural progress among the people: and if their musicians can travel to Italy, and the Italian masters resort to them, another musical nation may, in time, be added to the present few.

I can never allow any merit to loudness, except in military music, but hardly any, except the Turks, have understood this rightly: there is a certain limit to the difference or proportion between the *piano* and *forte*, which only the Italians understand, and which the French perpetually transgress.

I doubt our national taste does not of late improve, even with all the pains and expences of our rich and great: with the music of all the world before us, I think we often chuse the worst: between the French and the antiquated ideas, I fear our ears are spoiled, and that we are even in danger of going back instead of forward, and of being left behind other nations,

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at the distance of perhaps a century, in the natural progression of musical taste. You will readily perceive the musical defects of our nation, and by too many symptoms: without the true musical soul, we refine without feeling. I think this is perceptible, even in our first-rate musical parties,—in our having so often only professors to perform: by bringing a public concert into a private room, where the professed musicians direct, and the amateurs take no part, proceeding from the indolence and pride of luxury, and overrating the merits of execution, from a want of feeling for the expressive; the party, and the music, become thereby much less interesting, and accordingly it will, in time, be heard with a cold and fashionable indifference, even though the merits of the performance should increase. Besides, professors seldom make the best choice: to shine in execution is too often their object; they have not always the taste, nor the liberty, to prefer fine music to fine playing, and will not, in that way, contribute to improve the general taste, while there are so few of those feeling philosophic amateurs to

direct, and who take a part. I fear we shall, in time, have almost nothing but that unfeeling kind of instrumental difficult music, solos and solo concertos, which, though sometimes meritorious in its way, in the hands of a Giardini or a Fischer, will yet retard instead of promoting the study and improvement of various angelic kinds which, I fancy, may yet be produced,—kinds wherein the speaking melodies, the heavenly harmony, and heart-felt tones, prevail with accumulating effects, in the form of quartettos, quintettos, or concertantes. Since Giardini is leaving us, I think we are already losing that little taste for tone which we had acquired from him ; and I fear the taste for instrumental difficulties will likewise infect that of singing, and take place of the truly vocal and divine, before it is brought near to perfection.

There is yet much to be done in music beyond, or as it were out of, human nature, and many things to be expressed besides the human feelings and passions. In attending to some of the first-rate Italian singers, who have judgment to support a  
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certain simple dignity, I think we have directly some idea or inclination to place the character out of human nature, above its ordinary weaknesses and defects, and not subject to any unmanly, querulous, or violent expression; and the singers who give into those expressions, or imitate too far the instrumental tricks of execution, become vulgar or ridiculous like the French, or descend into the character of mere instrumental performers. There is an elegant sublime simplicity of idea attainable in all the fine arts, which can only be explained and understood in the compositions and performance of great masters. The idea of a divinity, for instance, formed and executed by a Praxiteles, a M. Angelo, or a Raphael, will shew us, at once, what it should be, much better than can be done by words; and it will be found very different from that of a modern French or Dutch artist, though the latter might be much higher finished. May not we hope that this great and good taste in music, at least, will continue so far to prevail in Italy as to keep itself alive, and form now and then a Senesino, or a Manzoli, to pre-



serve in the world a sense of the true sublime and simple style of singing?

As to composers, though, from a scarcity, even in Italy, of first-rate masters, the fiddlers may seem sometimes to step into their place, yet we may hope that now and then a Sacchini, and even a succession of such men, will probably be produced there, to polish and continue the chain of musical progression. Is it not to Germany we owe this scrambling fiddling taste for execution, which threatens to infect all our music? I only wish to moderate, not to banish it. If those ingenious German composers were to study simplicity a little more, and make music within the powers of the amateurs to perform, would it not promote and extend the art much more than by producing so much that can only be executed by professors? The Italians are often astonished to hear them, the French, and us, play so well, and yet sing so ill, and to see us always soliciting every body to sing where there is nobody that can sing fit to be heard. I think all the voices to the north of the Alps and the Pyren-



Pyrennees are distinguishable, and most of them defective, except some bass voices.

The ingenious modern way of writing or noting of music, which has contributed so much to its progress and complication, has perhaps likewise destroyed much of its fire and effects: such is the fate of every thing human; there is no good without its attendant evil. When we come to be so scientific and artificial as to write and study music upon paper, the noble enthusiasm of simple heroic tunes is probably gone: we calmly calculate and compare the beauties and contrivances of harmony, without much feeling, or dwelling on the melody or song on the sentiments, the great passions, or events it expresses, or was wont to express: so that our pleasure does not keep-pace with the merits, or at least ingenuity, of the compositions produced, but seems to go in a contrary direction; and our passion or love of music, the most essential, seems to cool and diminish as the variety and quantity of musical productions increase.

In the progress of refinement, we gradually forget that music was probably intended as an extemporary effusion of the mind, as well as a source of studious and refined pleasure; but the latter, you see, gradually swallows up the former. There are certain occasions when the music or the song should, at least, appear to be the immediate effusion of the fancy or passion, and the production of the moment. In China, it is always supposed that a musician sings and plays spontaneously, and it is a disgrace to want a book. Even now, in our most laboured compositions for the theatre, the actor or singer would produce much less effect if that small degree of deception were dropped and he were to read his part, instead of getting it by heart. Hence greater and more various effects might probably be produced, by assisting the deception, and sometimes placing the whole apparatus of the orchestra out of sight, and moving them to different distances, as we have seen partially attempted, and generally with considerable success.

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We *tramontani* are certainly too stationary in our taste and invention, and forget that music is a progressive art, naturally subject to perpetual progress and variation; and more especially since we have begun to complicate and refine it, we must let it go on; and where fancy and genius abound, the best things of last year must cease to be the best of this,—as in Italy and Spain: but I think in France and England, they keep teasing and tiring every person of any musical feelings with the same things to eternity.

Indeed we meet yet with some extemporary performers of song in the countries most musically disposed, as in Italy, Spain, Wales, Scotland; and of instrumental, even in England. If your organists would travel, and get rid of their national old vulgar church style, their voluntaries might be worth hearing. I can fancy, at times, great things in the rapturous poetic effusions of an ancient bard, singing in the style of a Homer or Ossian, to his harp, partly extemporary, or on some known sub-

ject, embellished by the warmth of momentary fancy : but since music has lost her simple and sublime, with her poetic origin and ardent admirers, and thence, perhaps, her best extemporary powers, her bards and minstrels are no more ; she often becomes weak and sickly, cold and languid, though very ingenious and refined ; and her greatest excellencies, her real and transcendent merits, are beyond the feelings and comprehension of those who are not musicians. I sometimes imagine, if music were again to be taught at the common schools, we might perhaps rekindle some sparks of the warm and ready genius for composition, make every body performers, and double the pleasures of the world. It seems to be still so taught in Germany ; hence the musical superiority of the Germans ; and hence they may go on, keep nearer to the Italians, and leave the rest of the world behind ; but their style of music, as far as it may be called their own, is not perhaps yet fit for imitation, nor to take a lead : it seems peculiar to themselves, and had better be left and admired in their own hands : it seems  
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to me too much broken and affected, not sufficiently simple and natural; pieced and patched out with very pretty materials, but which seldom join well, so as to form a good and entire whole: it seems a pretty and a peculiar species, but not a comprehensive class or genus: it is the minute and rich Arabesque, but not the grand and simple Grecian architecture.

All ranks and professions are interested, and all should join in promoting good taste in all the arts, and should assist, or contribute towards the forming some fund for sending young people abroad, and in establishing good schools at home, some for music, under Italian masters, like those at Naples \*. There should be public employments for the greatest proficients,—for

\* I have since learned, that a musical school was planned by Dr. Burney, and established under his direction, and Giardini's, at the Foundling Hospital, some ten or twelve years ago, but was overthrown in less than a month, by fanatics who pretended it would corrupt the morals of the children. The late increase of an ignorant and vulgar style of fanaticism, the growing weight of its influence in matters of public importance, are but melancholy symptoms of our progress in education, or in legislation.

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those who had got beyond every nationality of style and manner, and had gained certain prizes at Rome. No master of music, for example, should be admitted as candidate for certain posts, till he had composed, at least, one Italian opera to stand the test of a Roman audience. Half the musical expences of your rich and great, bestowed in this way, would have double the effect on the national taste and genius.

We have divided the liberal, in imitation of the useful arts, perhaps too much : some of the ancients had better ideas of those things, and of their mutual connection : with them, music and dancing comprehended more objects, which they perceived to be mutually dependent : we have separated those into more parts, and may thereby have advanced some of them farther : but those parts have now almost forgot each other ; they go on singly, and are scarcely now parts of the same whole : their uses and connection may together be forgot. A very good violinist, for instance, is now often but an indifferent judge of song, and the

the professor on one instrument does not often understand the music of another: the moral uses of music likewise, its natural influence on the passions, manners, and on the other arts, may gradually disappear.

Had it not been for the Italians, music might have been left to degenerate in the cold hands of cloistered superstition, and in those of itinerant fiddlers and pipers; for, alas! the poor bards, who might have been formed into some useful and elegant institutions, were barbarously crushed before music, taste, and letters, could be said to revive: colleges of such men might have been established, so as to preserve and improve all the connected arts, and would have linked former with present and with future times: or if Italy had recovered her liberty and importance with that glimpse of taste and knowledge in the fifteenth century, and had understood the art of government as well as some of the others, all the arts, in her hands, might have gone on to improve each other without interruption,

and might, from thence, have spread and fructified much more throughout Europe: but then Italy would perhaps have conquered the world again: however, the danger, the possibility of that progress is now probably past, and not likely soon to return. We cannot expect, that those things can ever be taken up again with the vigour of youth, by old and worn-out nations, reduced by oppression, superstition, and indolence.

Till some nation arise, beginning from the usual rude state, governed in the true old paternal and patriotic spirit,—the poet, philosopher, magistrate, and musician, frequently united in the same person,—till then, we cannot perhaps expect to see revived the great character and enlarged features of music, and the other arts,—nor a sufficient plenty of warm, poetic, musical, and heroic, minds,—nor the true spirit of society and government, of education and happiness, on principles sufficiently simple and perfect. Since most of the European nations have so long passed those periods,

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this kind of retrospect and romantic speculation may be thought vain and fruitless; but if we do not sometimes look back on the line we have passed, we cannot so well judge of that before us. However, the present delightful, though refined and complicated art of music, will probably be preserved by the Italians, even beyond the other arts, supported by their beautiful language.

Since all words are not fit to be sung, nor are they much more so for being in verse, the composer, now the only judge who must determine these things, should sometimes be the poet likewise; like Scarlatti and some others: he should be a man of liberal education, of extensive genius and knowledge, and a great practical musician—a first-rate character. We shall not, probably, till then, get rid of the idea of poetic measure, jingle and rhyme, being always necessary to *aria*; nor of other similar barbarisms proceeding from the too great division of the arts, and their unacquaintance with each other.

It



It may be thought, by some, that we have already music enough, and that we may have nearly exhausted the best musical ideas: on the contrary, I think much, and perhaps the best, is yet to come. When we return from our erratic excursions, and find and keep the true path, and study effects, the finest things may yet be produced. I have sometimes fancied, that a great composer could set a whole story or opera to serious music, without words;—or could begin, by fancying or creating the music, and finding the words afterwards: we see some of the ballets tolerably done in this way, and they would be still better if not so full of French music and French dancing. Much silent, expressive, but temperate, action,—great variety of well accompanied recitative, might all be oftener, and more successfully used than hitherto, though we have already seen very fine scenes of that kind: when the nature and effects of *aria*, contrasted with recitative, come to be understood; when the different kinds of *coro* and *semi-coro*, intermixing, and alternating with single voices, and with  
distant



distant sounds, which may occasionally approach and retire ; when these and many other things come to be well studied and known, the greatest effects may be expected ; and then those scenes of distress, — of extreme sorrow, terror, horror, or despair, which we have seen so well expressed by Sacchini and others, are, however, yet far from being exhausted : they who do not see through these, a large field open for future effects and improvements, are not made to feel or to advance the art. Some fine musical scenes open to the mind such vast conceptions, that the art appears infinite. Some other parts, as the *duo* — those beautiful soliloquies and pathetic *arias*, — some solitary scenes of distress, have all been already so well executed, that one can only attempt to conceive how they may be varied without loss. Those scenes, with different degrees of contending affections, — different steps and bursts of passion, — the sudden transition from recitative to *aria*, from that again to another, and the contrary ; many of these have been well felt and understood, and highly worked up, — but never, I believe,

lieve, with much success out of Italy; that sublime part, not even the first of the Germans could ever fully feel, comprehend, or execute, unless it were such of them as became Italians, like Hæssle, Gluck, &c.

Yes, we must all submit to the Italians; they must yet dictate in this, and all the other arts of taste: but, alas! it is melancholy to see those arts with such threatening symptoms of decline in their native Italian soil, amidst so many surrounding advantages, upon which their growth and cultivation have been thought to depend: but many other things are necessary to their support, besides those advantages: without some radical change in their governments, the Italians will probably go on to decline in the arts, as in industry, virtue, and public spirit. In order to be great in one thing, we must probably be great in all,—in arts and in arms: many things, nay, every thing is perhaps necessary to raise a people to any great attempts; our pride, our ambition, and interest, must all be flattered, and gradually fed with hopes and  
rewards;

rewards, in order to make us move and exert ourselves: where any thing material is wanting, we are ready enough to find excuses for our neglect or indolence, and naturally gravitate towards repose. To advance far in the arts, a nation must likewise be of some political importance in the general scale, capable of national pride, and equal to the pre-eminence of taking the lead in some things of importance: there must be motives sufficient to attempt great establishments on grand and comprehensive views,—to stimulate and transport the minds of men not only to the labour of imitation, but up to the pride and warmth of original invention.

The great effects and love of music in other times and countries, might be no proof of its merit according to our standard. We see nations, who have only a few poor simple tunes, become fonder of them than we of the choicest of all our great variety. Luxury and plenty pall and blunt the appetite. The mountaineer loves his miserable rocks and glens, probably, far more

than the inhabitant of the richer plains does his cultivated fields; and these different degrees of passion and attachment will produce proportional differences on their minds; the one warm and wild, the other cold and sedate: even in modern times, we know that whole armies have been fired to enthusiastic degrees of exertion, by the timely striking up of some favourite national air or song: it has been practised with Highlanders, Swiss, Russians. Pleasures are providentially more equally distributed than they appear to be: they who have but few good things, happily, seem to relish them in a kind of inverse ratio of their number.

But it was not music, as such, in our idea, it was poetry recited or sung, as before observed, that so pleased and affected some of the Greeks;—it was some kind of musical declamation. In Italy, in their public speaking and preaching, and in reciting of verse, they have still some such tune, which indeed we do not at first much like; but it may have suffered great change,  
by



by passing so long through the medium of monkish ignorance and bad taste : on the revival of music, cloistered learning might take one road, and that of society and the stage another ; that this tune, our chaunts, the Spanish romance, and the present Italian recitative, may all have proceeded from the same source, though now so different. The ancient Greek modes, with their music, their declamation, and poetry, all connected, I can conceive, might have prodigious effects, and a permanent influence on their manners and character. When they became a Roman province, they probably soon lost those elegant ideas and amusements. Polybius, I believe, was among the last of their writers who saw, and was sensible of all the possible influence of music ; and it is vexatious to think, that probably no one will ever see it again.

We must suppose the Greeks had some good music, they felt so true and refined, so justly in every thing. It seems they had a method of notation, and with the nicest ears and sensibility adverted to every thing



in sounds and language: yet we see all was insufficient to transmit their modes of pronunciation, of speaking, reciting: we may wish they had possessed a notation more like ours, to have transmitted to us more of their meaning.

We moderns have no musical language: the expression, taken from the ancients, is now unintelligible to us: we have no language that sings, though we have music that speaks or expresses the passions, in ways however of its own, quite different from those of our elocution: the Italian being the best language for singing, seems to have happened almost by accident, or partly, perhaps, from some communication with the Greeks: the latter Romans had probably refined their taste and pronunciation by the use of the Greek language; that taste, with the acquired habits, powers, and posture of the organs, might have some influence in the formation of the language, which came afterwards to be gradually produced from the Latin, and the other languages of their neighbours and conquerors,

ors, viz. the present Italian; the singing did not probably grow up with it, but was afterwards taken up from the church. The Greeks, proceeding in a contrary direction, had probably formed a species of music and song, built on the accents and tones of their language, by which the degree of expression might be greatly heightened, and without being totally changed, as is the case with all our verbal expressions the moment we begin to sing any of them : none of the tones or intervals of our music having any relation to those of speaking, nor can the one ever recal the other to mind.

It is perhaps possible to note down common speech in Mr. Steele's way, but not by our present diatonic scale; and when it is done and performed on an instrument, it can give us no idea of any music or accompaniment. Mr. S. complains of a preference being often given in song to a pretty musical idea, though it run counter to every accentual property of the words : certainly, it must be so with our music; though it ought not often to run counter, it must

take a different path of its own : this is not an abuse, but a necessary consequence of the now innate difference between the musical and poetical expressions, which have no relation to each other in tone, time, or rhythmus, but only in the sentiment. The nearest resemblance may be thought to consist in the time; but in speaking the most measured prose or verse, you will find that musical time is never the standard the mind refers to : and the fancied division of musical bars in language, is too forced a conceit, and never can be applied : and no sounds can be music to us, nor give us any idea of musical expression, except those upon the scale which we have been accustomed to consider and to feel as music.

A few more remarks on the taste and genius of our merry friends here, before we quit them. With all their vivacity, and great abilities and passion for music, I think it is allowed, that they succeed as badly as any of us, and seldom please any but themselves in their compositions or performance,—but more especially in the vocal;  
yet,

yet, I think, while they keep within the limits of what may be called the lively or buffa species of music, where the time is well marked, and its motion essential, they are less offensive; many of their little airs, we all know, are rather pleasing to the most general or common taste, and that some of them are rather more than popular, or vulgarly pretty—if they could sing them. But generally, in proportion as the French venture beyond those limits (which they too frequently do), and attempt any serious expression of the great passions, then they as gradually become ridiculous, and presently get into the vulgar scream or howl, of extreme passion, or bodily pain, which is quite intolerable to every body but themselves: generally in extremes, they know but few of the numerous shades between, and where beauty and elegance generally dwell. But in every thing lively or comic they certainly excel; and their *petite opera*, in spite of their unfortunate language, voice, and manner, generally goes off tolerably well, on account of their natural, correct, and graceful action. Indeed, the wit and

humour, the lively or comic, of every nation, is mostly excellent in its way, and being rather local, is what no foreigner can with propriety pretend to criticise; and theirs, with the addition of the graces peculiar to themselves, becomes sometimes excellent. But the serious being more universal, and belonging to humanity in general, all are competent to decide on its merits or resemblance.

Though our musical taste in England may be equally deficient, yet from some things that have been formerly produced among us, I can conceive a certain degree of capability in our disposition and language, towards a kind of wild romantic or melancholy song, which might be carried much farther, if we could more frequently produce a Shakespear to write, and a Purcel to compose and to sing, or rather one to do all, and a succession of such men: but now, I believe, the wisest thing for us would be to remain silent for a while, and let the Italians sing to us, and travel to Italy while young, till we learn to sing like them: indeed, theirs  
is



is probably the only language now fit to be sung, and all nations, who have any taste, will learn and adopt it for that purpose, as Spain and Portugal. Nor are these things of such small consequence as may at first appear: if we have spoiled our mouths, our language, and our ears, by false delicacy and affectation, these defects will extend to seemingly distant objects: the sense employed in judging of these things can likewise judge of others; and when it is spoiled, its errors and deficiencies will have influence, not only on our music, but on all subjects where the ear and the mouth are concerned, and perhaps on many others where the connection is less obvious.

By *accumulation*, analogous sentiments assist and augment each other prodigiously; they multiply and increase the impressions, in some duplicate or higher proportion, much beyond the sum of all: if, for example, in music, to a fine *tone* be added the *chiarezza*, *vaghezza*, and good *modulation*, and then a good *portamento*, the effects will increase in some such progression;

sion; and, conversely, a deficiency in any of these will proportionally affect the whole: now, I fear, we are generally deficient in most of these, and sometimes in all. This doctrine of accumulation is curious: it goes much farther, and takes in the objects of different senses; numerous instances of which might be given, but which I must leave your fancy to pursue.

Taste and her attendant graces are at length introduced, though late, into your island, and are, doubtless, making some progress, though they spread themselves but slowly over the face of your country, and find but little space to dwell between the approaching extremes of vulgarity and affectation. Yet, I think, you may, by your usual perseverance, succeed, and get beyond all the other nations, except Italy, in most of the arts; you, philosophers, may go on and discover on what their advancement depends, if you can escape the danger of that national conceit which disdains foreign assistance: you may see the insufficiency of wealth alone, and the  
power

power of other incentives, more suited to the ambition and the caprices of genius; you may perhaps, in time, complete the chain on which their advancement depends, but which the want of a link may render useless.

The observation of your friend is sensible, and perhaps sometimes true, though probably more ingenious than solid, viz. that musical people may not be so well qualified to judge of the beauties of language as some others: and that, accustomed to the richer sounds of music, they may not have much relish for the more tame and rational beauties of speech. I have observed, that few of the poets of these days have much taste for music, but I have known musicians who had a taste for poetry: all this is from bestowing too much time and attention on one thing, and remaining unacquainted with others, from a too great division of the arts; and the musical ear, when turned to those objects, will be found, at least, as capable of distinguishing as any other \*.

\* Since the above was written, I have seen Rousseau's letter on music, and am pleased to find I have mostly adopted his  
his

his ideas: only I think he is still embarrassed, by considering music or singing as a species of elocution or declamation, and in endeavouring to subject it to some of the rules of speaking: whereas, I am still inclined to consider the musical art now as totally different, and subject only to rules of its own. Some other of his ideas are still rather too French,—as his notions of *duo*,—his own compositions; but we must not expect him to get entirely free from the shackles of the language and nation in which he was, in a manner, born and bred.

## L E T T E R XXII.

*Paris. — France. — Poetry, French and Italian. — Of Writing.*

To Mr. A. J——.

**B**EFORE you leave home, you will, of course, direct your reading to the objects in view, and see your own country: without these it would, indeed, be hardly worth while to go abroad and waste the time, which, in many other cases, becomes doubtful if it might not be better spent at home: but if you mean, like too many of our young travellers, to run away from your studies, or from yourself, into all the French nonsense and *etourderie* of the fashionable and foolish world, I have no advice to give, nor could you take it if I had: not that I wish to curtail the few trappings and pleasures of life, and cut utility to the quick; I only mean to relinquish advising, in mat-  
ters



ters of mere amusement, to others better qualified, and to recommend mixing business with pleasure for the advantage of both, and am totally against travelling without some tutor or friend; it will require all the efforts and knowledge of both to extract the essence of utility in travelling. We see too many idle and vicious young Englishmen, running about the world alone, without either restraint or assistance, both of which they stand so much in need of.

This same Paris you may find a very agreeable place, if you are well recommended, and likewise very useful to your views of study, if you have resolution enough not to be dissipated by its frivolous amusements; which is not so difficult, I think, as in London; and you may be less subject to various distractions and interruptions. This is more like a great country town, and not the seat of the court, nor of commerce, and therefore, I conceive, more agreeable. People here seem to have more leisure and inclination to converse,—to study, or philosophize

sophize with us ; while in London, you all seem perpetually absorbed in some anxious pursuit,—in the hurry and fatigue of business. Hence the agreeable arts of life are here more considered and improved, though oftner mixed up with a trifling or bad taste. Many things that are treated with neglect and contempt by your sulky matter-of-fact-men, become here of an agreeable importance. And if their people of fashion, their artists, teachers, *modistes*, &c. had but a little more true taste, travel, and knowledge of nature, many of their trifles might probably grow into real consequence among people of sense, throughout the rest of Europe, as well as here. If it should become the fashion among them, again, to travel, and to encourage strangers of merit, their superior vivacity and quickness of abilities would again appear, and turn to account.

If you can steadily pursue your plan of studies here, in chemistry, anatomy, philosophy, you may get more useful knowledge in two years, than in all the five you have

have passed at college. I am only in doubt if some of the time might not be better passed in some part of Germany, were it only for the habits of steadiness and application which may be acquired there.

To this agreeable nation and language, the world is, and may yet be indebted for many good things. Their manners and conversation, as well as situation, may long continue to attract the strangers of every country, and form a beneficial intimacy among us all—a kind of standard and point of re-union for European manners and society, which may have influence even on public measures and opinions, may soften and humanize the unfeeling maxims of state policy, and retard our falling, or driving each other, back into barbarism. We may, and perhaps ought, now to go on and polish ourselves upon them, and may gain more than we lose, by rubbing off some, though formerly valuable and distinguishing, points of national character. As nations mix and become better members of this European society, or republic,  
which

which seems now gradually to assimilate and associate more intimately than formerly. We must all conform, in many things, to what the majority may please to determine: so that it becomes daily more necessary, that this central and leading nation be well studied and known, especially by all those who may have any public part to act.

Although, in judging of taste and sentiment, we can, none of us, pretend to absolute impartiality, and although I am, rather voluntarily, an imperfect critic in poetic affairs; yet, you see we are not therefore deterred from judging for ourselves, and I feel not the less decided, even in the most singular opinions. You know, that I think they have hardly any poetry in French, and, to my ear, their language is incapable of the true sublime. Whatever good sense, or beautiful imagery, we may admire in their best poets, those are produced independently of their language; nor can their sentiments receive those embellishments which are conveyed by sound, till translated

into languages more capable of bestowing them. I have met with several of their pieces, which, in their native tongue, are sensible and interesting, but, when translated into Italian, become likewise beautiful, and hence more interesting. I confess, however, a decided partiality, you know, for the Italian, which, to me, appears the only modern language capable of expressing the poetic beauties, by the help of sounds. Nor does this predilection proceed entirely from its aptness for vocal music, as many of their first productions in poetry are not the fittest to be sung: but this language seems now the only one possessed of those beautiful combinations and arrangements of sounds that can charm the ear as well as the understanding, and from the effects of accumulation, both these powers are mutually increased. And yet these sounds are totally different from, and independent on, music. It would be difficult and tedious to explain here, in what their effects and beauties consist. To be sensible of them, the best way is to learn the language in the country.

I ought



I ought likewise to confess, that what pleases me most is that familiar and natural simplicity we meet with in Petrarch, Dante, Boyardo, Ariosto, Boccacio, &c. &c. with which I am so charmed, that after reading them, I cannot, for a long time, relish any other style. A French bursting or drawling attempt at sublimity would then make me sick.

Another, with different taste and habits, might think this all prejudice or prepossession. Hence we are led to doubt the certainty of any standard or fixed principles in taste. And this uncertainty must probably ever prevail in practice, after all that has been written and taught about it, so long as custom continues to be a kind of second nature. At least, in this manner, are we obliged to settle the matter, as well as we can, in accounting for the great diversity in taste, and of the opinions concerning it.

But although we can never bring all men to like and dislike the same things, and in

the same degree, and each of us will have his own scale or gradation of beauties ; yet we see some things are universally liked ; and there are, doubtless, some principles, or extended limits, where beauty ends and deformity begins, and within which, men and nations may differ without being wrong.

Both we and the French have likewise had that simple *naïf* manner of writing, before mentioned, and abandoned it again, I think, too soon, before it was perfected. They, soon after Montaigne, left, instead of imitating, his frank, easy, and graceful manner, which I consider as the natural *fort* of their language : they have, since, attempted, and gone through, several different styles in writing, to some of which it is certainly not so well adapted. They have written in the turgid and conceited, in the tedious and languid, manner. The fashion seems now, the rapid, short, fiery style, of declaiming on every subject, which I think answers pretty well in some cases, and suits the language, when employed

ployed with judgment and simplicity, in which, however, they are often deficient, and can seldom keep within the bounds of moderation. Voltaire I consider as their great and best leader in this, and he has already had, and may yet have, some successful followers. But you have, doubtless, already good enough accounts of these things.

## L E T T E R XXIII.

*The French a great Nation.—General Reflections.*

To Mr. A. J——.

**I**N considering the French, we are sometimes led to doubt or wonder, how a nation, made up of such defects, under the most oppressive kind of government, could ever be so great in so many ways. On examining the country, and seeing how the people live,—bread almost their only food, and not always good, nor plenty: so small a share of the fruits of their own labour for themselves, and that share not very secure: though often apparently contented and happy, we must doubt the reality of that happiness:—if really contented with poverty and dependance—with dirt and misery, we must expect but little vigour or exertion from such a people. However

ever we may be inclined, in speculation, to magnify the influence of moral and physical defects, with which we are not much acquainted, and to feel too great a contempt for whatever differs from us, though only in appearance; we must recollect, that men are men, though in rags and wooden shoes; and twenty millions of people so well situated, and compressed as these are, and with so happy a disposition, if only left to themselves, and protected from foreign injury, and from each other, even though considerably oppressed by their government; must still be a great nation, as the world goes; *dans le pays des aveugles, les borgnes sont rois*: and we know that these people have the art to appear still greater than they really are, and to acquire more than their due share of influence in the scale of Europe. With half their present evils and impediments removed, they might perhaps be too great for all the rest.

What a pity you English do not chuse to be more amiable, that you might rival them in every thing, and even in their own way.



But, indeed, I think rudeness is now the mode in both countries: the French took it up, probably from fancying it was English, and we copy it from them. An affected cold stare of indifference, or *nonchalance*, now meets you in all fashionable societies—it is alleged, by way of leaving you at your ease; very different from the over-anxious, the troublesome attention and politeness of former times. Their morning dress, which they call *à l'Anglois*, is perfectly slovenly, and often nasty. The manners, in some provincial towns, where one meets yet with a little old-fashioned civility and formality, *de la vieille cour*, I find far more agreeable.

There are certain advantages, if we knew how to use them, that attend every character and way of life. Even poverty has its advantages. This people, though not equal to us in strength, resolution, perseverance, yet, in many situations, would be able to exist, while we should starve. And this we shall find to be the case, in some degree, on comparing ourselves with  
 most

most of the other inhabitants of Europe. Great things have sometimes been done by their armies. In the hands of a master, an indifferent instrument becomes a good one. The great man, who knows the *fort* and the foible of his nation, will do as much with such indifferent tools as some others with the best.

Fortunately, mankind have generally some motives for exertion, and are naturally so bent on getting forwards, that they can hardly be kept back by the most powerful impediments, such as civil and religious tyranny, joined to shackle them. Their natural wants and passions will not let them sit long still. And here, their lively and agreeable manner, and perpetual appearance of activity, all help to impose a little, and make them seem capable of more than they really are. You know, that the world considers things in a slovenly way, and how few are above the vulgar methods of judging of men and things, of merit, of characters, by a few outward appearances,

ances, or by some accidental success; leaving the few observers of men to look nearer, and estimate their real value. You are a great nation, made up of great and solid materials, like the buildings of the Romans. This is a great nation, but composed of lesser materials, like the tabique walls of the Moors.

However, not only comparatively, but rather positively and intrinsically, we must allow this nation a great deal of merit, of industry, and other virtues, in spite of all their faults and weaknesses,—of poverty and bad government. But they, as well as other people, are fitter for some things than for others. I should, for example, think them fitter for manufactures than for agriculture or navigation. And it might be from some idea of this kind, that the great Colbert seemed to promote manufactures and commerce, beyond what the nature of the country has been thought to require, by other great men, as Sully, &c. They are known to be far better for an  
attack

attack than for defence, which you should never forget. But I do not wish to give you remarks already well known.

It is not to prejudice you against this people, that I endeavour to sift out their faults and defects.. I wish to point out to you the less obvious, the hidden flaws of things, which you may, one day, examine for yourself; and that you may be led to look farther than the surface of appearances, which is certainly full as necessary in this country as in any other.

We all see through different mediums. It is difficult, and perhaps impossible, to give or acquire some sorts of knowledge, without prejudice. All knowledge, that deserves the name, tends to system. Things, in order to be understood, must be arranged: but our system once arranged, becomes itself the source of prejudices, and when joined to those of habit and education, forms a stream which few can leave or withstand. Do not previously, if you can help it, adopt any system of mine,  
nor

nor any other, that may lead you to pre-judge the cause. Read and arrange, but doubt of all till you see.

But human nature would not advance, and experience would be of little service to mankind, if that of each individual were confined to his own use. And yet it cannot often be taught, or applied to the use of others, so as to save them the trouble of going over the same ground, though it may help to direct them in their road.

In distinguishing what we should be taught, from that which we should teach ourselves, we shall probably perceive, that in the early stages of society, men are naturally in the first extreme, of trusting to themselves, and being taught too little: and that we moderns are arrived at the second, of expecting too much from instruction, leaving too little to nature and to our own researches.

I only



I only meant to sketch you out a few of the most striking features of the outline, to be filled up from your own future experience and observation. But with all my zeal and sincerity, I may not succeed, even in the little I attempt. I think we seldom can, in this way, give all the ideas we intend.

## L E T T E R   XXIV.

*Travellers. — French Peculiarities; their Civility, Etourderie, Urbanity, Philosophy, Imposing, Public Spirit.*

To Mr. C. J——.

**T**HE *fort* of this people consisting chiefly in appearances, and of a very engaging kind, you will be more subject to over-rate their merits than their defects, and the danger will be in your finding them too agreeable. Many of us, who set out to visit Europe, at least, seem to be caught and attached here; and when we reflect, and ask ourselves, how we come to spend so much of our time and money among such trifling people as here abound, of both natives and strangers?—how, and wherefore, so many of us get together in these French towns, as if merely to walk about  
and

and play cards?—we are, perhaps, ashamed to confess all the truth, and have recourse to various pretexts, to deceive ourselves and our friends. At home, I think we hardly perceive so many idle people in the whole country, as may here be found, of English only, assembled in one French town. Our best travellers go farther. Our men of taste and learning persevere, and get on to Italy at least. So that you will increase your advantages the farther you go. Besides those of seeing things more worthy your attention, you will meet with travellers more worth knowing than those who stick fast here, taken with the frivolous pleasures of French societies, and with the cringing obsequiousness of the miserable crowd.

I should be more satisfied if we always acquired, by these little French trips, a greater esteem and love for our own country, as one would think we naturally ought; but I fear many return with less, instead of more, aversion to slavery and

wooden shoes: nay, there are some who are not ashamed to profess a preference for these poor tyrannized countries, insisting, that it is only such that are fit for a gentleman to live in: but, indeed, that is generally after their return, for, while here, I think we all agree, as usual, in abusing the country where we live.

Nevertheless, I am still a warm advocate for travelling whenever it is possible, and I fancy that something good always sticks, even to the idlest of our rambles; and that they may afterwards be always readily distinguished from the mere John Bull, fox-hunter, or country squire, by their conversation, attention, or something in their manner.

Although we English generally assort and live too much together abroad, some few of us, however, as stragglers from the main body, prefer the company of the French; and they, on perceiving our desire to be acquainted, meet us more than half way,  
in

in that prettiest frank and cheerful manner with which, indeed, they do every thing. They are extremely and agreeably good, and spare no pains, nor civility, to oblige us, while we take care not to put them to any expence, to which they are not easily inclined : a disposition which I approve. Their spirit of œconomy is, to me, delightful, and ought to make us ashamed of our extravagance, instead of the contrary, which we too generally feel.

Certainly nothing can be more completely agreeable than some of their people of fashion. The troublesome affectation of *etourderie*, in their young men, I find the least bearable part of their society. A young Frenchman is like a greyhound puppy, and teazes you without mercy or meaning. But the grace and readiness of their manner and conversation makes one wish to forgive them a thousand things. The French, in general, like the ladies, are never awkward, except where strength is required—*Si manières*, as they so prettily



tily exprefs it. It is vain, and mean, in your beaux, to attempt to copy thefe. In fome men of riper years, we meet with all the graces of youth, joined with that urbanity, attention, and good fenfe, which all agree to admire, and wifh to imitate, as the confeffed model of manner and converfation : and in all forts of good behaviour, fome of them may nearly deserve the place they affume of dictators, and in fact, may ftand next to the Spaniards, who, I think, are yet univerfally the beft-behaved people in Europe, and the only people, in any given circumftances, whole behaviour may be entirely depended on. I fear the Englifh begin to be lefs confidered and fought after, in this country, than formerly.

You already know the high efteem and refpect due here to many of their philofophers and men of letters, who have laid open fcience, and combated error, even in the ftate, with a fpirit that would do honour to the freeft nations : and that the ladies have regained, and have nobly joined  
much

much of their natural influence, towards bringing philosophy and science into real and active life: and though success, as to general and practical utility, is probably limited nearly within the present circle, by the nature of their government and religion; yet they have brought much useful and agreeable knowledge to light, and have laid it ready to be taken up by the people whenever they may have liberty and security enough to make it worth their while, and when their government may consist of the wisdom and virtue that may then be found in such a nation.

We ought not, perhaps, to be so rigid, as to condemn or despise their little arts of deceiving themselves, and us, a little, into supposing that the useful sciences are generally cultivated and applied throughout the country, because they write and talk so well about them at Paris. Nay, we may admire that address with which they prejudice us all in their favour, and persuade more than half Europe to believe the

French nation, in general, to be as clever and informed as they appear in their books and conversation. And they, every where, get some credit for most of those superiorities which they are ever so ready to assume. We are easily caught by their pleasing conversation and writings, and are not then disposed to examine too strictly into the validity of their pretensions, or of the many excellent terms and expressions with which their pretty little language abounds, as if made up on purpose to cover their want of the realities.

From your knowledge of their character, and of their love of fashion, it is natural enough that you, in England, should be taken in, and believe that the whole nation may be influenced by a few philosophers in the capital, and that they are leading each other on to the highest improvements; forgetting that the poverty of the people alone, will long render any material improvement impossible.

You

You might likewise think them like yourselves; each, in some degree, interested about the public good: among you, any little event or opinion may presently become the object of general attention, and its influence fly quickly through your island, by means of your numerous papers, and affect the opinions, and even the conduct, of many; forgetting all the while, that this is almost peculiar to ourselves: despotic power tends to separate or insulate every place, and almost every person, from the rest: nothing but fashion is interesting enough here, to carry any thing through the whole nation. Any effectual reform in their government or constitution is highly improbable: none but the princes can ever have power enough to do it; and we know how unlikely it is, from their education and national disposition, that any of them can ever have the will, the knowledge, or character equal to it. Some of them may form a thousand over-wise and farcical regulations, and without producing any good effects: till they restore and improve the constitution, they cannot make the people exert



themselves near to their full force, nor oblige their superiors to do them justice. And this is, perhaps, impossible, till the people have more property and are well represented in the legislature, and we know their inadequate ideas of representation. The people are—nothing: the nobility, army, and church, form the nation, and must always probably side with the monarch. How is it possible to reform such a state?

I think, in general, a people shew an indifference about public affairs, nearly according to the degrees of oppression with which they are ruled. Its being so much the case here, I consider as a more deadly political symptom than any of yours, which, though more violent, are not so dangerous, nor incurable. Your mobs, robberies, disorderly elections—all those marks of licentiousness more than of liberty,—of the deficiencies in your police, and of your being too little governed, are not, however, so irremediable as this tranquillity and indifference, the sure mark  
of



of their being governed too much. Your temporary follies, and perpetual party animosities, produce so much less mischief, than such things any where else. In short, your symptoms are only those of rude health, while theirs indicate a chronic and incurable disorder.

## L E T T E R    XXV.

*On our Changes in Taste, &c. — Of the  
French Military.*

To Mr. A. J——,

**Y**OU need not fear my becoming a convert to French manners and opinions, or that I shall deviate much from my first plan, which was, to deal more in finding fault, than in finding out things worthy of praise or imitation. The first I still think one of the great pleasures and advantages of travelling: it maintains and increases our ideas of improvement and perfection; and these are ideas of great importance in the world, though they should never be put in practice. The second class, *viz.* of good things, such as are worthy of imitation, become obvious enough, and will strike at sight, without being pointed out, and are generally better known

known than the defects, which are the proper objects of improvement.

But I have no objection to change, nor to tell you when I do; as I wish not to conceal, but to shew you every part of the history of my own mind, that I think may be of any use to you; though we are very apt to be obstinate in support of what we have once happened to advance, probably from a natural idea of the importance of being consistent,—but oftener, I fear, from a false pride.

I may, doubtless, be gradually reconciled, by habit, to many things which revolted me at first; but, I doubt, I must always retain my first dislike of others. I must still insist on finding fault, for example, with their taste in most of the fine arts,—in music, poetry, tragic action, drawing, architecture,—with their government and administration,—with several institutions,—with their taxes, farming, several trades; and must ever regret the poverty and oppression of their lower classes. Although  
so

so great a difference of taste and sentiment be a kind of a social loss to myself, not to relish or enjoy what I often see all around me enraptured with ; yet I cannot always feel with them, though I have made many, and some successful, endeavours for that purpose.

You know their military character, and their passion for arms, which proceeds chiefly, I believe, from a kind of vanity, and partly, perhaps, to revenge their domestic slavery on their neighbours. They were among the first who contributed to bring us all under the ruinous necessity of keeping up these numerous standing armies, which will probably, in time, again destroy all good government, and involve the world in tyranny and barbarism once more, unless their increase be checked, and their constitution improved, by gradually reverting to militias to supply them with men, and partly to supply their places ; and by restoring good legislation with military education, and thence morals, manners, and good order. The French have, perhaps, occasion for greater

armies than some other nations, to do the same business, because a weaker race of people, and more easily dissolved by fatigue. During an ordinary campaign, they have often had one-third, or more, of their army in the hospitals.

By these standing armies, their government has obtained the double object, of opposing their enemies abroad, and subduing the nation at home. And the intention has succeeded. This nation appears now habitually fixed, by character and inclination, in that submissive and impoverished system. Though formerly more ferocious, turbulent, and factious, as during their civil wars, they are now the most pliant and easy to govern of any people we know: so that they would not now know what to do with their liberty, if they had it. And if such a government could make the good of the people a primary object, they would ere now, and might very safely, have reduced their peace establishment, at least to half its present number, and have eased the subject of many heavy



heavy burdens and regulations. But power is ever unfeeling; and the more absolute, the more suspicious, careless, and inconsistent.

They are likewise perpetually changing their military systems and regulations, but I think seldom gain by the change near so much as to make up for the inevitable evils of changing. It is generally wiser to mend the old than to make new, and even the most necessary changes should be gradual, if possible. Concerning minutiae, which should generally be constant, they are often innovating, and disputing with a degree of heat and animosity to which we are strangers. Already the Count St. G——, after labouring most patriotically to introduce his system, must probably see its original merits worn down by opposition and intrigue, to a few alterations of the least importance: and the Count himself, it seems, must soon give up even these, and the army, to some other commanders and systems, perhaps more trifling and capricious. If the cabals and the genius of  
the

the nation would permit them to retain what is good of his regulations,—if they could keep only the œconomical parts, they might gain more than by any other of their changes for a long time past. Their troops were certainly getting into what is called very high order, and if well commanded, they might soon be made capable of many things, though not of fatigue and perseverance.

But it is in the ordnance, as we should call it, where the greatest changes, and the bitterest controversies, have lately taken place between Monf. G——, and his opponents, and which have divided the *corps royale* into two inveterate parties. Surely all the other nations together, could not have said and written so much about short and long guns, and without deciding any thing.

I am tired with reading the numerous publications on this endless controversy, and have given it up till some one shall collect

collect the substance of it\*. The experiments of either party are not calculated to discover the truth, but to get the better of their opponents. The French are not naturally very fit to carry on experiments. That task requires a more persevering, impartial, cool, and philosophic turn of mind.

You know they have been lately very attentive to their navy, to which, in consequence, I think it behoves us to be very attentive likewise, and to watch all their operations. The history of what they have done, in this department, since the time of Louis XIV. and of what they are now doing, would form a curious collection, and like themselves, and indeed like most other human ideas and institutions,—a mixture of sense and nonsense.

In some chief points, they are as far in one extreme as you are in the other.—

\* This has since been done by a Captain Scheel.

Their

Their depending, as usual, more on theory than on practice, while we continue in the contrary extreme, is all characteristic of the two nations.

The power and expenditure of the military part, are not sufficiently controlled by the civil; and we know that the common degrees of human integrity, when uncontrolled, are not to be depended on: in such a case, some abuses must creep in, and when once introduced, each will bring a crowd of others. Their present marine system may not, therefore, be much more lasting and incorruptible, than any of the former.

They place great dependance on certain sea manœuvres: but military novelties, and their effects, must soon be over, before a vigilant enemy. In wars between European powers, such art or artifice cannot give much durable advantage, nor long overcome real strength. Happily, perhaps, for mankind, we are all now so nearly on a footing, and communicate so  
freely,

freely, that any of the arts used in war by one power, may be presently transmitted to the rest, and may be evaded or counteracted, so that all is soon reduced again to the decision of actual force, generalship, and the chances of war.



## L E T T E R XXVI.

*The Schools, Military, &c.—Of the Monastic Orders and Superstition.*

THE modes and places of education are, in every country, worthy of attention, and as an officer, you will, of course, inquire and take notice of their military schools here. I shall only observe, that you will probably find their voluminous regulations, as usual, to be better on paper than in practice. They plan much better than they execute, which is just the contrary, I believe, with us. So that we might, in many ways, learn of each other. We can often borrow their ideas, and improve upon them in the execution. We can sometimes execute what they only talk of: with, perhaps, more judgment, and certainly better workmen, we may get more from their books than from their

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practice: but we should see both. I hope you will find, with me, that we have been estimating their schools, and scholastic modes of education, a little too high. These appear to me yet more faulty than our own, either from defect or redundancy. They teach either nothing or too much. We are often surprised at the ignorance of some very decent looking men; and the common people are taught nothing at school but the superstitious ceremonies of religion. Even their best places of education, though they may serve to model Frenchmen, are surely improper and insufficient to form Englishmen. Men are here to be framed, modelled, and cut to a pattern, and nothing left to nature: it is the bed of Procrustes, where people are to be shortened or lengthened so as to fit it.

I fear we must allow that education, for many of the practical and important offices in society, is yet very deficient among us: theory and practice are yet far from being sufficiently acquainted. Our idle universities seem to fit people for few, or no very  
useful

useful purposes in life, except the church. Pride, idleness, or useless knowledge, seem to be too frequently the chief acquirements there: and most of our other schools, and especially boarding-schools and academies about town, are mere expensive impositions. Our military education has probably been the most defective: we have produced but few officers fit to command armies; and those few have come from among the chosen number who have had the military ambition and enthusiasm so strong as to make them travel, inquire, and serve, wherever there was any thing to be learned: a Cromwell, a Marlborough, a Wolfe, &c. may be distinguished; but the catalogue, if continued, would be too short for so long a space of time. Yet, I think, the English character contains as many of the materials as any other, for great generals or great politicians, for I consider these two characters as similar, and indeed necessary to be joined in those leaders of mankind;—*nous sommes de l'étoffe dont on en fait*. But perhaps an island cannot pro-

duce them in such plenty as a great continent: the want or demand for such, is probably somewhat diminished likewise by the security of your insular situation; and by the nature of your government, which, like your island, may be left a good deal to itself, and like a good child, without doing itself any harm. This French government cares not much about her own subjects, and seems only anxious to govern the rest of the world, and hence may produce more of those called politicians than you, as you are generally much engrossed by your internal affairs, and are seldom, I think, well versed in foreign politics. Hence, likewise, probably proceeds the misfortune of your not being always good judges of those military and political men you may have, and your not knowing how and where to employ them, according to their talents and characters. Many a Wolfe, and many a Marlborough, may have died in the lower ranks of our service. We have not yet employed, nor made a proper use of, those few officers  
pointed

pointed out and recommended to us by General Wolfe and Prince Ferdinand\*; they knew an officer by a kind of instinct. And as to politicians, you have not, I fear, judged much better. You have sometimes fancied that great lawyers must be great politicians, which I fear is not often the case; and I should not have very great hopes of the cabinet that was led or governed by them. I mean only to speak generally, and of such whose character is formed by the habits of their profession, in which, I think, the nature and minutiae of the investigation may produce a kind of microscopic vision, but does not tend to give the habits and velocity of mind, nor to form an eye of sufficient field and scope for a great politician: but we have known good officers from that line, and there are, doubtless, among them men whose genius and abilities are upon the largest scale, and

\* I have heard that Prince Ferdinand said, “ The English send me generals proper for commissaries, and commissaries fit for generals.” The present General Boyd was then, it seems, one of his commissaries. This anecdote is worth preserving, as it characterises so well our national councils, the speaker, and the persons meant.



who are beyond the vices and habits of their trade; and some who are impelled by nature into that path, from other walks of life: some of these are often the greatest, the leading characters in most professions; and we shall find, that almost every branch of knowledge is indebted to such interlopers for its principal inventions and improvements.

But I think it may fairly enough be doubted, whether an Alexander, a Cæsar, a Tamerlane, a Mahomet, a Frederic, a great warrior and legislator, in one, could possibly be produced within the confines of a modern university, and of an island: it probably requires more room, and more great objects of employ, for such minds to expand, and to be gradually wrought up into the habits of thinking and doing great things. Admitting the vulgar idea of some men being born generals, poets, mechanics, &c. their formation is obviously progressive. We know that the King of Prussia was not a general during his first campaign, nor scarcely an engineer at the last: and if

we

we knew as much of ancient heroes, we should probably find the same progression.

Though this French nation and society may form a tolerable school for some of our grown gentlemen and ladies, yet we certainly do not better ourselves by sending our children to be educated in their country. Nay, I am sometimes quite angry and unhappy about this late pernicious prejudice of English parents, in favour of what they call a French education. The children commonly fall under the care of nuns and friars, who are generally the most ignorant and vulgar part of society; people inferior to our own servants and workmen, with more superstition and less knowledge. It is only when parents, or some relation, can accompany the children, that it can be worth while, or should be thought of. The great object, even of the most diligent and best informed in those school convents, is to convert the children to their own superstition. Their whole conduct in the business is secretly directed to that object, which, indeed, is one of the primary intentions

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tentions of most of the monastic orders, and of their schools; and saving of souls, by converting them to their faith, is, with them, a first-rate merit, and an indispensable obligation.

I cannot help observing, *en passant*, that the English government would do more, by effectually excluding these monastic people from their dominions, and particularly from Ireland, than by all their laws against popery. And I believe, the first government in Europe who shall have resolution to begin the dissolution of those now burdensome and dangerous fraternities, may find it easier than commonly imagined, and other nations will soon follow the example. They are now only popular among a few ignorant devotees, chiefly of the lower classes of people, and are much weakened since they lost their potent legion, the Jesuits, who were, to be sure, the most powerful and dangerous, because the most learned and useful. This abolition would be a popular measure, even in some Catholic countries, especially if care was  
taken

taken not to give jealousy to the rest of the church ; many of them would then probably secretly rejoice at the measure.

In abolishing these monastic orders, and their too numerous convents, perhaps a few of the most useful might be safely enough retained, especially as every considerable change in society should be as gradual as possible. Humanity, and the world in general, would agree to the preservation of that assiduous and benevolent sisterhood, who leave their cloisters, and attend to the most painful duties in life, the care of the sick.

Since religious wars and disputes have subsided, in England you seem to have forgot the nature, the real state and spirit of religion in Europe. It is not so much changed as you suppose ; it is only that, being tired of the subject, you have ceased to talk of it ; and it is no longer in fashion : or you fancy that all are become, like yourselves, more moderate, rational, tolerant :—nothing like it : toleration is still,  
with

with all the bigotted Roman Catholics, who are yet numerous, a reprobate, heretical, detested doctrine. The bloody inquisitorial spirit only pretends to sleep, and lies ready watching, to be roused by the first occasion that may give a fair prospect of success,—by any combination of designing and powerful hypocrites who may chuse to make use of it. So that religious wars, which you fancy have ceased for ever, are, on the contrary, I think, just as probable as ever. The Protestants are only saved, like the Turks in Europe, and some other lesser powers, by their real strength, by a kind of balance or jealousy of interests, and difficulties about dividing the spoils; but the conquest is steadily kept in view by the faithful, and particularly by the monastic or regular orders: and though we may laugh at their folly, I think it is not beyond a possibility, that a body so well united in opinions and objects, may, by time and accidents, become sufficiently united in interest, and may accumulate power enough to destroy all liberty of opinion, and restore universal tyranny,



tyranny, ignorance, and barbarism, once more. The two parties have lately kept each other in awe, but the turn of the scale, and our safety, can be insured only by more wars, or by the dissolution of most of these legions of embodied and determined enemies.

Something similar to your situation may be observed throughout Europe; the people in higher ranks, who do not mix enough with the lower, even governments and philosophers, are not generally acquainted with the nature and condition of the common people, and their superstition. We are apt to fancy a liberality and benevolence of sentiment to extend and become general, from the example of ourselves, and a few gentlemen with whom only we converse, and of a few authors who flatter and rock one another into those temperate and philosophic dreams: but the gentlemen and philosophers are all together but a very small part of mankind, dispersed in small and disunited parties, unconnected with each other, and of little influence

influence in society ; and neither they, nor their dreams of improvement, are heeded or known by the lower classes, the bulk of mankind, who are kept at too great a distance from the upper, involved in their own manners and opinions. In this course of civilization, there must probably always arise, at least, two different species or characters of religion,—a gentleman and a plebeian religion. From this situation of things, as the distance widens between the ranks, manners, and opinions, of men, I think the evil consequences may increase. Hence proceeds not only a want of connection, but a growing hatred and animosity, a kind of secret war, founded chiefly on superstition, between the extremes of society ; and we ought to be thankful we do not oftener see the worst effects of this disposition break forth, from some accidental sparks of mutual offence. To remedy these evils, is now far from an easy task, since government has unwisely given up the religious direction of the minds of men. In education and employment probably now consist the most efficacious means of cure.

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The nation that shall the first establish a sufficient number of proper day-schools for real and useful knowledge, discipline, and industry, among the people, will bid the fairest for success, and may by that means form the best subjects,—the most tolerant, the most powerful, and the least dangerous, as a nearer resemblance and connection would then take place between all the different ranks in society.

## L E T T E R XXVII.

*National Emulation, and American War.*

To Mr. C——.

**T**HAT constant emulation between the French and us, I think has lately been, and is likely to be, of more service to them than to us, in some things. While our young travellers learn of them little else besides their language, their fashions, and follies, they are imitating some of our useful arts, and may, in time, vie with us in some trades of importance. Besides their attempts to imitate our wares at Rouen, and other places; some coach-makers, and other trades, at Paris, are trying to work like ours. They have lately, I think, taken from us our old political conduct, and are becoming (at least the pretended) protectors of freedom. Let us hope we may, in this too, learn our own again from them, and with more reality, at second hand.

I tra-

I travelled with a Spaniard and a Frenchman, both coming to England to examine our arts and manufactories, and both men of some practical and useful knowledge. One circumstance among others, however, I observed, which might prevent their increasing their stock of useful knowledge from ours, *viz.* a strong prepossession in favour of every thing French. I soon perceived they think that nation far before us in every thing. This prejudice in favour of France is becoming very general, I see, throughout Europe; which of the two is the first for industry, work, ingenuity, &c. have, for some time, been subjects of rather general controversy,—general, because it is difficult to avoid taking a part between contending nations: but I think the English party diminishes daily: *l'Europe devient encore plus Française.* However, we know it will be long before such governments as those of France and Spain can attract men with capitals, or enable others to raise them by manufactories; and we know what difficulties they had to encounter in the few they have attempted. Perhaps it would be wiser for them to depend more, as yet, on



the produce of their lands, and for that purpose to begin by changing their tenures, taxes, and methods of farming, than attempt to force hands and capitals into new employments, while others remain neglected that are of more national importance.

The Marquis de V—, who is a very sensible man, has told me, that he now considers our fall as certain and inevitable, from our want of wisdom, and even of common sense, about this resistance in America: first, in creating it, next, in not overlooking it, and in our opposing it at last with so little political and military skill: that he is sorry for it, on account of what his country will lose, by the want of that rivalry and emulation between us, the source of so much exertion, and of so much good to both nations; for he thinks we shall fall too low, and not retain sufficient weight and importance to be their competitors in any thing. Must Carthage then fall? May not we hope that she will yet survive this wholesome check; and exist, and prosper, even without colonies, those most expensive of all customers? May they not,  
in

in time, become better customers, without the charge of governing them, when both sides shall recover temper enough to pursue their mutual interest? Besides, I believe our rivals here are fully as far gone in the decline as we.

I grant that it is far better for both, and perhaps for all the nations, that France and England should exist together, as separate and nearly equal kingdoms, though we should go on to hate, and make war on each other. Let us hope the other nations would not sit quiet and see the one destroy or subdue the other. Not that I think it impossible for a great majority of Europe to be wrong, or too supine, or blind to the general interest: witness their not forming a junction sufficient to oppose the Mahomedan inroads into Europe and Africa, and their permitting the division of Poland.

This American dispute of ours seems warmly to occupy the attention of the whole world, and in a manner which indicates the strongest prejudices against us. They all

consider America as already independent, and upon that supposition are forming various and interested speculations. In case of universal tyranny in Europe, which may possibly again be the case, in time, by a partition of it among a few overgrown despots, and then perhaps soon again devoured by one; North America, it is thought, in that case, may serve as an asylum for persecuted liberty, which may, from thence, reverberate on its persecutors. But that, as well as many other speculations, are certainly very distant and doubtful, with a continent so lately, and as yet so thinly inhabited. Even if they should become completely independent, there cannot probably be any settled government there for a long time to come; and in their various struggles, there is no foreseeing yet so far into what may be the result. If they continue obliged to enter into our weak and corrupt systems of European politics, and to depend on our divisions and alliances, their subjection, or mutual destruction, will probably be the consequence; and yet without sufficient connection with Europe, they must probably decline, or  
thrive

thrive much slower. Peopled from thence, they must partake of its vices, in addition to their own plentiful stock. Some of the European manners and institutions, which they have adopted, may not suit with their situation, and may help to prevent their progress and their union. Indeed the difficulties of reuniting such a lengthened country, and such varying interests, may long be insurmountable, especially when the most powerful motives of union, the government, or enmity of a mother-country, shall be wanting: if they are not wise enough to make use of the present motive of union, a common enemy, while it lasts, and by means of the war, establish a government sufficiently powerful, general, and uniform; a peace may separate such ill-connected materials, and finally tear them to pieces.

But the worst part, for us, of this war will be, not the pecuniary loss and expence, but the ill success and disgrace that will probably attend it; and hence our sinking in the scale and in the opinion of Europe. The ideas you mention of divid-

ing our army to attack the country in different quarters, that we may be beaten in detail, and especially if those armies leave their ports, or their *depots*, so far as to shut up or endanger the communication behind them, which we know to have always failed from Xenophon downwards: in short, the whole original plan of subduing by force what is by that means rendered unworthy the increased expence of keeping, are all ideas so thoroughly absurd, ungenerous, tyrannical, or unmilitary, that they must entail disgrace on those who can adopt them. But it is not probable that all your army or navy can adopt them, or be hearty in the cause; nay, the contrary is sufficiently notorious; and, indeed, nothing could save us from eternal disgrace but its being pretty well known every where, except in England, that the majority and the best parts of the nation are against such measures: if that majority does not soon prevail, your constitution, and your America, will be together lost. Such are some of the wild speculations that occur, among a variety of others which you may have already heard on this subject.



## L E T T E R XXVIII.

*Memorandums of different Journeys.*

**I**T is no easy matter to chuse among my notes, and to judge of what is worth telling you; nor is it always easy to determine what can be told. In this great and complicated art of alphabetical writing, rendered so easy and familiar by habit, we are not always aware of the limits of its powers. Your complaints of my brevity and obscurity, in some things, may be well enough founded, and yet not to be entirely remedied: we cannot by this great art transmit, perhaps, above half our ideas, and these incompletely. I must conclude by giving you still some more of my *brevities*, from the memorandum book.

Among the notes of this, and some other journies, I find, for example, the follow-

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ing. On approaching Paris, my Parisian companion was delighted, even with the smell of it, which I thought very offensive.

Weighed my English pound avoirdupois very exactly with Mons. Briffon, and found it 8538 French grains.

I find I dislike this capital for several things,—but all down the Seine is beautiful. Paris unfit for the poor, who are not sufficiently considered by any rank of people here, except by some of the clergy, among whom there is a great deal of merit, but too much of that kind of charity which promotes idleness. Is this superstitious and ceremonious religion a necessary supplement to this kind of government? Has not the church contributed to make the civil government defective in order to create work for herself?

The country from Paris to Orleans is likewise rather naked and *triste*. Corn, sand, freestone, light soil, few trees or  
fences

fences till you come to the forest of Orleans, and even that consists mostly of small trees and brush-wood. The town nasty, and infested with bugs. Some good houses, one good street, and a fine bridge, with long, light, beautiful, elliptic arches. They are repairing their Gothic cathedral here; they began professedly to preserve it in the same old style, which is very good, but they cannot keep to their pattern; they are now changing the taste and architecture. The French think they can improve every thing. Even the simple and beautiful Greek vases they often load with ornament.

From *Orleans*, down the Loire, we begin to see better cattle, agriculture, population, trees, houses, villages, in short, a rich and fine country: and *Blois* rises nobly on the hills that overlook the river;—as does *Chanteloup*, farther down on the other side: *Monf. de Choiseul* has here been at great pains and expence to lay out and manage some lands *à l'Angloise*; but it will prove too expensive for this country. The cha-

*teau* is too much in the French style for us: these *mansard* clumsy roofs offend my eye all through France.

*Tours*—in a fine well watered plain, surrounded by distant woody hills; the whole very rich and fine.

*Marquis de Voyer, (D'Argenson,) aux Olmes*.—A good house in a bottom, with a high tower for view; how many finer situations for a house among the surrounding hills? This great estate was probably bought with public money. I believe most of the ministers, in this country, make fortunes. There is no House of Commons in this nation to call for accounts. Here is a tolerable breed of English race-horses; but bad grass lands, after much pains and expence, so that they must probably fall off.

*Chatleraud*—inhabited almost entirely by smiths and cutlers. How easy to employ these four or five hundred workmen to much better purpose, and to produce at least twice the work? but there is very little

the public spirit in this country,—few capitals to be employed in manufactures, a want of machines, of skill, of exertion: it must be long before this nation can rival you as manufacturers: it might be better for you, I think, if they did, and were equally rich and industrious with yourselves; they would then be better customers than now: if nations were not oppressed and impeded by their foolish governments, each of them would probably produce and manufacture what was most natural and proper for their country and climate, and the one would supply what was wanted by the other, to the greatest mutual benefit of all. May not we hope to see governments open their eyes on this subject? during this investigating and enlightened age, as people come to read A. Smith's book: but governments are generally led or advised by the little peddling people in trade, who see nothing beyond their own little nonsensical systems of monopoly, and are not probably the best politicians in the state: indeed, it is yet hard to say where to find better: the best remedy would be, for ministers to  
travel



travel and take great pains themselves, and consult most with those who have done the same,—with those who have lived, and have been employed in different countries. If, by chance, a minister reads and reasons himself into a good system, it is probable he knows not the chief part, the way to carry it into execution: a few general rules or principles are easily learned; in the exceptions to those rules, and in the practice, consist the difficult lessons. Theory and practice are no where sufficiently acquainted. Power is generally too proud to be taught, and too ignorant to judge: it thinks it can do every thing, and amidst other nonsense, vainly fancies it can trim and manage the balance of trade. If governments would let trade alone, it would probably balance itself much better than they can. If either nations, or individuals, have a mind to expend beyond their income, I fear their governments cannot then prevent them, if they have previously taken such bad care of their education, as to let them once acquire those vicious habits.

*Poitiers*

*Poitiers*—on a fine ridge of hills, with some good houses, but many ancient and mean : in the country, much misery, and wooden shoes.

*Angoulême*—likewise on a noble commanding situation,—a fine extensive view over a well-cultivated country towards the sea, rich in wines and brandies. Iron works and cannon founderies,—and a great waste of wood and land from the want of coal. I should like to examine the strata of these countries, to some depth, with some of our naturalists. There are fine quarries of good stone, I think, all over France ; and there are probably plenty of metallic ores in the central parts.

*Bordeaux* — beaux, bucks. — Luxury with commerce. Is not this like joining parsimony and extravagance ? Such are the inconsistencies of man : but mere expence does not always produce taste or refinement : the luxury of commerce, I doubt, is often attended with ignorance and bad taste : however, you will find *Monf. and Mad.*

Mad. Louis here much worth knowing: he is building them a very fine theatre, and means to publish a particular detail of the work: in great works this should never be neglected. Monf. L—— thinks he has performed some things rather new in the cutting, &c.

This Garonne is a fine river, and the means of a great trade. Seventy thousand ton of wine, at least, annually exported; and the consumption of the place and its environs, equal one hundred thousand, *viz.* fifty thousand, computed from the duties raised on it, and as much, it is thought, escapes by fraud: a great West India trade also;—they say, equal to fifty million livres yearly. We learn, that the French part only of Hispaniola produces as much as all our West India islands together, and not by capitals from home, but by those gradually raised there.

These magistrates of Bourdeaux propose to try a tax upon salt, for experiment, meaning to discontinue it if found inconvenient,

venient, or not to answer: they must be simpletons if they believe it will ever again be discontinued. Here is Voltaire's *Academie des moutons rouges*; a nickname it may probably retain (see *Candide*).

Such are not the places where science chuses to dwell: she is rarely found to be very nearly allied to commerce, or the love of money; only in England, I think there are some hopes of her becoming more nearly allied to trade, as your education must surely, in time, be extended and improved, as its importance must become evident to a rich and improving nation. Under such governments as this, even riches produce but little public spirit: indeed, the public, in these days, is nowhere considered as it ought to be; and here it is hardly considered at all. We have just heard the opinion of some great lawyers and magistrates against the public, in the disposal of some litigated public money, which shews how little they consider the public good: to settle the dispute, the money has been given to a convent: false and inadequate  
ideas

ideas of justice, and of its importance, given to the people, are not the least of the evils attending a bad government.

About Bourdeaux, I think, are the best farmers we had yet seen in France, especially of their vineyards, which are well managed, as are all the other parts of this wine business: it seems natural to this country, forming at once a flourishing agriculture, a manufactory, population, and riches. Whoever wishes to understand all the wine business, and its cultivation, should come to this country: it is wonderful the Spaniards do not come here to learn those branches, which might be made of such consequence to them.

Government, vainly fearing that too much land may be turned to wine, attempt to make the farmers turn more to corn; better let them alone, for they are the best judges in these matters: but power is very apt to be over-wise. This wine farming is to be sure a kind of lottery, which tempts with great prizes, and is subject to still greater losses,  
like



like mining, or like our hop-farming: but still the best way, I believe; is to let the farmers alone, they will best discover and pursue their own interest: but, alas! how few governments know how to do this, and let their subjects alone? No one country can produce every thing; the attempt would not tend to improve, but to impede or force nature, who wisely seems to intend that men and nations should want, should supply and assist each other. An entire independence on others, would be an impracticable cynical solecism in human policy: it would stop the sources of prosperity, by diminishing the motives to industry, and occasion a gradual decline: a system nearly adopted by Spain, and afterwards too much imitated by other nations.

Such, in this last letter you are to expect from France, are the remarks which I have collected from my notes; those, with various names, numbers, and abbreviations, help me to recal numerous other connected ideas and occurrences, which would neither be easy to communicate, nor perhaps worth it, to any  
other

other person : and it can hardly be worth writing much about those parts that we only run through. Useful knowledge and reflections require time and attention, and can only be produced by a residence.

But some of these epistles may furnish you with leading hints and marks to steer by, as well as longer and more laboured accounts : the most explicit ought not to save you any necessary labour, nor could they, perhaps, lead you more directly to your object, which is the point of importance. Could we learn to estimate things according to their real value, and be content with what is really useful ; what time might be saved ! and how much farther might we go ! You may, I hope, find leisure to enquire farther into particulars, into the real state and causes of many more things in this country ; and study their laws, history, government, arts, manners, &c. on the spot : but do it with judgment and selection, and to save time,—*bornez vous à l'utile & à l'applicable.*



